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"Esta carretera nos atraviesa": Indigenous girls' body-territory mapping in the emergence of Chinese capital in the Bolivian Amazon

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“Esta carretera nos atraviesa”: Indigenous girls’ body-territory mapping in the emergence of Chinese capital in the Bolivian Amazon

by

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Dedication

A las niñas de Santa Ana de Museruna: Por destaparme los sentidos, sacudirme las certezas, y tejer conmigo en las palabras.

Como dije en algún otro lado antes:
“Para que se exploren y escuchen de otras maneras.
Para que conozcan y curen sus heridas.
Para que les sigan creciendo alas a sus sueños.
Para que se conozcan con sus memorias y emociones.
Para que se sacudan de culpas, vergüenzas, y ataduras.
Para que se amen con sus contradicciones, crisis, y tropiezos.
Y sobre todo, para que cosechen la ternura, fortaleza, y sensibilidad que se necesita para bailar como lo hacen las mariposas luego de cualquier tormenta”.

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Abstract

"Esta carretera nos atraviesa": Indigenous girls' body-territory mapping in the emergence of Chinese capital in the Bolivian Amazon

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The geopolitical dynamics now disputed by China have been widely analyzed in a macro-structural context, rather than in the lives and bodies of those who experience their effects in an intimate way. Although the rapid expansion of Chinese finance in Latin America has attracted the attention of some academics and policy-makers, few have approached the territories themselves in which Chinese capital has settled. My research charts the experiences of indigenous women and girls from the Santa Ana de Museruna community in the Bolivian Amazon traversed by the construction of a highway financed and built by a Chinese company. Drawing from ethnographic work and feminist participatory mapping, I analyze three "body-territory" maps made by indigenous girls and their mothers about the transformations experienced with the Chinese presence in their territory. This community-based approach allows me to explore the intersections of gender, age, and race that are the subject of interest of feminist geography. Drawing on indigenous feminist theory, I analyze the situated, emotional, and embodied geographies engendered in global dynamics of power. This case informs the everyday violence, resilience, and

dreams experienced by indigenous girls with Chinese capital, the emotional re-spatialization of their community around the company and its workers, and the fears and opportunities inscribed in and as their body-territory. I argue that these maps destabilize Bolivia's anti-imperialist discourses complicating the "revolutionary" narratives around Chinese presence in the Amazon. Furthermore, the maps contribute nuances to understand the complexity of the Chinese presence in Latin America, and demonstrate the importance of decolonizing methodologies for the production of knowledges that contest Cartesian approaches of spatiality, corporeity, and intimate affects.

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The Chinese Dragon in the Bolivian Amazon: An introduction

> "Perhaps empire never ended, that psychic and material will to conquer and appropriate... What we can say for sure is that empire makes all innocence impossible."
>
> —Jacqui Alexander, Pedagogies of Crossing: Mediations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred (2006).

"China grants Bolivia a millionaire credit for infrastructure, transportation, and electrical energy projects"[1] was heard on the radio of the minibus I was riding in La Paz, Bolivia in 2015. All the local press media covered in detail the commitment of Vice President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Álvaro García Linera, with the People's Republic of China in his most recent visit to Beijing. *"7.000 million dollars"* in credits had been agreed to launch various development projects across the country. The authorities of the then and current ruling party, Movimiento al Socialismo (Movement towards Socialism, MAS, for its initials in Spanish), would tirelessly repeat that the south-south alliance they consolidated with China was the end of an era of political and economic subordination imposed by the US empire and its long history of destabilization in Latin America. Both the then president Evo Morales Ayma, known worldwide as the first indigenous president, and his international allies affirmed that China was the alternative, or better yet, the horizon of anti-imperialism. Thus, under the premise of recovering national sovereignty with development, China quickly took over almost integrally the

[1] See Los Tiempos (2015). China dará crédito de $us 7.000 millones a Bolivia, según Evo. Retrieved from: https://lostiempos.com/actualidad/economia/20151016/china-dara-credito-us-7000-millones-bolivia-evo

management of the country's strategic sectors. "*We are aiming for an absolute integration"*[2] of the Amazonian departments of our country, the authorities said in the media, and many questions spun in my head about the extent to which decolonization, the expansion of capitalism, and the defense of Mother Earth could converge for those who inhabit the areas in question.

My research has its roots in a sensitive, personal, political, and collective process that begins in 2015 around the statements described above. At that time, when I had started working at FOBOMADE[3], an ecologist and indigenous rights non-profit in La Paz, I was eager to find ways to understand what was omitted in the wide-spread data on external debt, GDP growth, and the monolithic discourses with which both the left and the right named these processes. Back then I was studying Communitarian Psychology, and nourished by the fervor of both feminism and the popular social movements that were woven around the defense of life, I outlined a set of initial questions that matured into the basis of my current research. Inspired by the vibrant convergences between feminism, ecology, and the question of decoloniality, my questions changed and expanded until they were written in a code that opened the possibility of another horizon. Progressively, and with the unconditional support and guidance of my organization, I embarked on researching what was said, and perhaps most importantly what was not, about the daily and intimate meanings of the world's geopolitical dynamics that this time led by China were

[2] See Cámara Boliviana de Hidrocarburos y Energía (CBHE) (2015). García anuncia viaje a China. Retrieved from: http://www.cbhe.org.bo/noticias/6156-garcia-anuncia-viaje-a-china

[3] Foro Boliviano sobre Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo (Bolivian Forum on the Environment and Development).

settling in the Amazon. What do the "integration" plans of the Amazon mean for its people? Intrigued, I began conversations, mainly by phone, with the indigenous leaders of the Beni region with whom my organization had maintained close ties for 30 years.

"Los chinos están arrasando con los jaguares en el Parque Madidi" (the Chinese are ravaging the jaguars in the Madidi National Park,) some said. Others highlighted "the 'inhumane' working conditions" they saw them laboring under. "*Dicen que son presos traídos de China"* (they say they are prisoners brought from China) was also mentioned, but little was mobilized about the subjective and experiential dimension of the Chinese deployment in the jungle. What was hidden behind the news of the violation of labor and environmental rights in the Amazonian territories? In those brief and casual conversations, the dialogues were only echoing what was exhibited in the public spectacle of the politics around the presence of Chinese capital in the country. The political and economic implications that accompanied this process had tangible effects on the people's lives that were essential to understand it, of course, but it could not be reduced to a recount of them. "Integration", as a previous question insisted, could not be understood when rendered timeless, placeless, and disembodied. Integrating is in itself a relational, unfixed, multiple, and ever-changing process of spatial interconnectedness (Massey, 1994: 5). Evidencing this, one thing had become clear to me: things would not be as I had imagined, as the most urgent task was to shaken up those discourses that were increasingly worn out in meaning. It was unquestionable that the political agenda that inevitably outlined the gaze with which I was observing and was being observed constricted both the questions and the comments of those who were closest to the processes that to this day interest me. The leaders who had

kindly provided me with their insights on the subject were not exempt from this. It was their relationship with social organizations, communitarian authorities, workers' unions, municipal and national governments, among others, that structured their expressions on this dynamic. But, what happens when we prioritize the voices of those whose uses, inhabitation, and senses of and in this process are situated differently? What comes out of the refusal of the seamless accountings and instead of "accepting and working with already-constituted" spaces and narratives free rein is given to the "constructedness" of them? (Massey, 2005: 10).

In the following research stages, I aimed to carefully disassemble, and to some extent, overcome that NGO imprint to observe and listen to whom the Anthropologist Charles Hale (2001) would call non-key informants. My interest in this particular point is based on the understanding that power interventions are not gender, racial, or age-neutral. Power, rather, is inherent to and has spatial effects in the voices, feelings, words, and stories that are told. Thus, several months later in my first encounter with local women and their children in everyday life, my questions were drastically reformulated in form, scale, and intention. What bodies, landscapes, sounds, emotions, words, silences, and sensations are engaged in a feminist analysis of the geopolitics now led by China? The women and girls whose experiences are the subject of this thesis helped me understand that these seemingly abstract capitalist processes configure political regimes that permeate the most intimate of the bodies, affections, and landscapes of the Amazon today.

What was walked throughout these processes that lasted years awakened a desire and a provocation to do research in a different way. On many occasions my interactions with indigenous women and the jungle itself staggered my ability to enunciate. Putting into words, in fact, was the act-sensation that marked this proposal. In the field, the women would not talk about abstract *things*. On the contrary, they would point out the ways in which the dusty air, the loud noises, the shaking ground, or the poignant smell coming from the sewer ruptures caused by the machines have changed their lives in specific ways that were felt in specific parts of their bodies. More often than not women would open their doors, walk me to the areas where they felt the discomfort, and invite me to touch the fractures on their walls. In these acts, I later understood, they were expressing that the community had changed—it had acquired new presences, new meanings, new labels, and of course new feelings that evoked new spatial and emotional paths that were absent in the public discussions. It was in this moment that intuitively and without having any formal knowledge about space and its powers, I proposed to map. It is only until now, looking back at that experience, that I understand the political, emotional, and material meanings of what Mishuana Goeman (2013) puts forward in her book "Mark My Words". Indigenous women's spatialities, insofar as they are "a spatial embodiment of knowledge", can fruitfully reveal the falsehood of "the seemingly objective and transparent forms of Western mapping" (Goeman, 2013: 16-23). Understanding indigenous women's spatialities, looking at the places they occupy or avoid and how, then, can reveal the processes of production of space beyond a "point on a graph or locale" to rather make room for traces that carry with it a "'way of being-in-the world'" (Goeman, 2013: 9). This, I

believe, intimately ties the physicality of the territory, the tangible marks of the colonial, capitalist, patriarchal rhetoric and practice of empires, and the most sensitive fibers of the bodies.

This work is a reflection on the experiences anchored in the "cuerpo-territorio" (body-territory) (Cabnal, 2010) of those indigenous women and girls abutting new Chinese capitalist presence that do not appear in the official reports on the "miracle" of Bolivian economic growth, nor the discourses about undermining capitalism. Deploying the indigenous and communitarian feminist perspective proposed by Maya-Xinkan Lorena Cabnal, Aymaran Adriana Guzmán, and Senecan theorist Mishuana Goeman, I base my research on the notion of the body-territory as an indivisible amalgam of the body as a territory, and of the territory as a body. Thus, this research is motivated by two central questions: *(1) How do indigenous girls from the Santa Ana de Museruna community in the Bolivian Amazon represent, embody, and spatialize their territory as it undergoes changes brought by the construction of a highway by the CCCC Chinese company? (2) What do the girls' maps reveal about their and our understanding of the presence of Chinese capital and workers in their community and in Latin America in the context of global capitalism?*

In responding to these questions, I foreground the emotions, perplexities, fears, dreams, and intimate hopes that spatialize *in* and *as* the body-territory of indigenous girls in the community. I do this by analyzing the process and the collective drawn traces of three body-territory maps made in March 2019 by fifteen indigenous girls aged between 6 and 12 years old. By engaging in the deployment and reading of these gendered and aged

cartographies, this thesis offers an alternative perspective of the geopolitical processes today led by China in which indigenous communities are enmeshed. By attending to the emotional geographical knowledge and spatial imaginaries of these girls' partial perspective and scale, I argue that despite its image as a Latin American bastion of popular and leftist struggle, Bolivia attends to the emergence of a Chinese capitalist hegemony in the continuation, rather than disruption, of the settlement of a new imperialist project. The three maps that I here present demonstrate that capitalism's expansion disregards political parties and ideological national discourses to install continuities hardly distinguishable from other imperial processes. Through the maps' traces, furthermore, I exhibit the sensorial, affective, and material trails opened by the company's presence in the girls' bodies. In them, the Cartesian methodological and theoretical legacies of the body and the space are contested, and the raise of a new feminist decolonial geographical knowledge is exhibited and set in motion.

In this scenario, and following indigenous feminist theorists and a feminist political ecologist lens, I explore the intimacy of geopolitical struggles that, through infrastructure projects such as the one I here analyze, filter and expand in the Bolivian Amazon. With this approach I hope to go beyond the reproduction of the Smithian "invisible hand" of the market, without dissociating it from the dynamics that shape it. In the following chapters, I explore how what is rendered abstractly configures the indigenous girls' emotional geographies of daily life and becomes re-territorialized in-and-as their bodies. In doing so, the maps destabilize the static narratives of either the victim or the uncritical beneficiary. These maps, in fact, by not having their origin in the academy but neither being alien to it,

highlight that the notions of the abstract do not mean more than masculine, white, adult, abled, extended and naturalized as universal. It is precisely this that leads me to analyze these processes "not processing them upwards through theorization" but "taking them down to their most basic elements in an effort to de-theorize them" (Sassen, 2003 cited in Guzmán, 2018: 17). This shift enables the re-localization and re-codification of the gaze to see in detail what would be missed in more abstract categorizations (Guzmán, 2018).

Thus, in the second chapter, I situate my case study temporally, geographically, and politically. Here, I critically analyze the political and economic dynamics that set the conditions for the Chinese capitalist expansion to settle in the Bolivian Amazon in the last 15 years. In this part, I explore how the rise of a "progressive" government to power in Bolivia, contrary to expectations and revolutionary governmental claims, have further deepened its role as raw materials supplier for world powers such as China. In examining this, I describe the Territorio Indígena Multiétnico I (Multiethnic Indigenous Territory I, TIM I for its initials in Spanish), the Santa Ana de Museruna community, the Chinese CCCC Second Highway Engineering Co., Ltd. company's characteristics that is now settled in the community, and the highway project that crosses it. In the last pages of this chapter I present a proposal of the angle from which I read the expansion of Chinese capital. To do so I make dialogue the concept of frontier-making (Moore, 2011; Ioris, 2020) with the notion of the body-territory (Cabnal, 2010) and push the boundaries of both of these concepts forward.

From another angle, in the third chapter I analyze the dialogue processes with indigenous women and girls from which the collective body-mapping emerged. In this chapter I dedicate myself to reflect and draft a decolonizing feminist grammar and praxis. Placing the mapping process at the heart of my analysis, I revisit the path of the methodology's design as a means of interlocution with the Amazonian women and girls before, during, and after the workshop itself. Transversalizing the text with reflections on the scope, frictions, and limitations of an anti-colonial academic and political praxis, I review my intentions to contribute to the writing of a sensory, emotional, and intimate epistemological grammar in constant movement and negotiation. In this chapter I argue that methodological approaches are inherently intertwined with epistemological production processes—and so are the ways in which the knowledge is constructed, collected, and later presented or narrated. Towards the end of this chapter, I offer the questions and prompts employed in the collective mapping process to show one of the few extant examples of the implementation of this theory in the field.

In the fourth chapter, I dedicate myself to examine in context the three body-territory maps drawn by indigenous girls in March 2019, and later exhibited in an art gallery in La Paz, Bolivia. In destabilizing the Cartesian mind/body diagrams and the affect/reason, nature/society, home/market, production/reproduction, private/public dichotomies, the maps belie the existence of purely economic processes. In this chapter I offer an example of what is put forward by indigenous feminist authors: from the girls' scale, body, and senses, they affirm that feminism's subject is weaved into the communitarian fabric as a whole. In this sense, the fertility of the body-territory maps calls into question the

(im)possibility, and to some extent fictionality, of the notion of individuality and fragmentation between the human and non-human. This amalgam, conversely, is the collectivity that composes and extends from and into the girls' bodies. The body-territory, in a single word, compacts the emotional-affective, material, historical, and political continuity of the body's fibers as territory, and of the territory as body.

Finally, in the fifth and final chapter I discuss and re-assess the bond I maintain with the Santa de Museruna community today. I take this opportunity to reflect and situate myself both in body and territory temporally, geographically, and emotionally. Furthermore, in this section I briefly touch on some of the changes that Bolivia and Latin America have experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic: the deepening of China's relations with the region, the crises and opportunities of political changes, and the recent achievements of indigenous communities in their long fight for autonomy. Finally, I examine the possibilities, limitations, and desires that are mobilized as questions to continue thinking, feeling, and walking a practice (academic or not) of anti-colonial feminism.

Chapter Two
China in Bolivia: Frontier making and intimacies in the jungle

> "Nosotrxs no pedimos la propiedad de la tierra, nosotrxs proponemos otro arte de habitar en la tierra".
>
> —Moira Millán, líder mapuche, El Bolsón (2017).

"Proceso de Cambio": Situating Bolivia's last 20 years

In colorful and tumultuous circles, on August 6, 2006, Bolivia experienced a vibrant moment that promised to change history forever. *"Vamos a refundar la nacion"* (We are going to refound the nation), said the recently elected president Evo Morales Ayma, and the country whose population majority is or has indigenous descent celebrated with hope. I was 13 years old and lived in an agro-industrial town called Montero in the department of Santa Cruz in the east of the country when the streets were filled with colored flags, typical songs from Bolivia's west where I originally came from, and shouts of joy. In Montero, large numbers of migrants from the valleys and Andes of the country gathered to work on the land of the *Cruceño*[4] landowners and businessmen who produced sugar cane, soybeans, sorghum, sunflower, rice, and livestock, among others, but only few times before I had seen so many *mujeres de pollera*[5] walking through the central squares of the town. Everyone had the televisions turned on at full volume to listen and see with eyes wide open what that August, commemorating the country's independence from Spain, was heralded as the end of the centuries of submission, aggressive extractivism, and imposed

[4] From the Santa Cruz de la Sierra Department in Eastern Bolivia.
[5] Polleras are traditional clothing of Bolivia's Andes and valleys' women. Polleras are bulky semi-long skirts part of highlands women's ethnic identity.

dispossession by the white mestizo elites. The greetings, hugs, music, dances and languages of those who recognized each other at a glance took over the public space in an extremely conservative and racist department that had historically expulsed its indigenous peoples and any non-white individuals with violence. *"Ahí vienen los collingas*[6]*"* (Here come the collingas), some shouted at us at school, and in parallel, in the city of Sucre, the famous Constituent Assembly began.

"Nunca más sin nosotros!" (Never again without us!) (Postero, 2017: 2) said the signs of the hundreds of social movements' leaders and indigenous authorities who attended this historic assembly. Among national and international media, academics from around the world, and spectators from all sectors, the representatives of the 36 Bolivian indigenous ethnic groups celebrated by mixing languages, singing, and dancing with pride while waving their flags in the main square of Sucre. Silvia Lazarte, a Quechuan woman former domestic worker, peasant, and union leader was the welcoming president of the Assembly to which those who had fought, longed for, and resisted for this for generations attended with tears in their eyes. At that time, it was inevitable that the memories of the struggle of the previous years would invade the minds of those who from different angles and bodies observed what was happening. Between 2000 and 2005, Bolivia had experienced one of its most important transformations as a result of the social-popular struggles (Gutiérrez, 2008; Salazar, 2015; Schavelzon, 2012). Those years, first with the Water War and later with the Gas War, left bullet marks on government buildings, just as

[6] Colla is a term used to refer to people from western Bolivia. This is a pejorative word used in a racist way to refer to dark skinned people from the highlands and of indigenous descent.

it left fear and hope sown in the indigenous populations, peasants, miners, workers' unions, and grassroots organizations. These groups are the same ones that have starred in the tireless struggle for dignity and against capitalist dispossession. It was them, who had set the conditions for what was one of the most rebellious times in national history, them who celebrated at the opening of the Assembly. But, what was the genealogy that led to the cultivation of that ceremony? What would the horizon of this revolution that promised to interrupt the "hegemonic neoliberal trajectory of reorganization of life" be from this new State (Gutiérrez, 2008: 17)?

The Water War in 2000 was the scenario in which grassroots community organizations disputed the common right to water and rose up against its privatization by a North American company in Cochabamba (Gutiérrez, 2008; Linsalata, 2014; Salazar, 2015). Shortly after, in the Gas War in 2003, the popular sectors of the country were organized around the resistance of the exploitation and export of natural gas to the United States and Mexico to once again put at the center the land, the territory, and the communitarian life (Gutiérrez, 2008; Linsalata, 2014; Salazar, 2015). These two are some of the most paradigmatic examples of this period of social insurrections that expressed in rich ways the potential of emancipatory struggles against the dispossessing logics of capital. In both, the resistances had overthrown figures and structures of historical power domination and dispossession, such as transnational companies and the then President Gonzalo (Goni) Sanchez de Lozada (Gutiérrez, 2008; Linsalata, 2014; Salazar, 2015; Composto and Navarro, 2014). The women's autonomous community pots (which they used to cook back then) were the ones that nurtured the popular forces who gave rise to the

MAS party and Evo Morales as president of Bolivia in late 2005 (Gutiérrez, 2008; Salazar, 2015). It was in these pots that the embodied memory of solidarity, rebellion, and hope that I described at the beginning of this chapter was simmered.

Thus, that MAS that in 2006 led by Evo Morales and Álvaro García Linera put forward the promise to decolonize and de-neoliberalize Bolivia to found an "Indigenous State" (Postero, 2017) had a long-term trajectory that exceeded the political party. That insurrectionary heritage that celebrated the triumph of the party recognized each other in body and history, yes, but never declared a final victory with the election. They, with Felipe Quispe "el Mallku" at the head, declared that *"...el proceso de cambio, el Pachakuti, continúa, no empieza ni se acaba con el gobierno de Evo Morales"* (…the process of change, the Pachakuti, continues, it does not start nor end with Evo Morales's government) (Salazar, 2015: 107). Over the next few years, the tensions and struggles were not absent neither from those who were pushing for a radical change in the structures of dispossession, nor from those who resisted giving up the power that they had historically monopolized. It is precisely this that brought to the fore the need to revisit the memory of what engendered the Bolivia in which the research I present is framed temporally, geographically, and politically. In 2009, after important disputes over the content and place that indigenous peoples occupied in the new Constitution, it finally was approved, and with it the Plurinational State of Bolivia that we know today was born. But, why is it relevant to revisit this historical process?

As the subaltern bodies whose agendas targeted the destabilization of political power occupied positions of leadership in the state apparatus, the ruling classes began to push and to declare feeling "disadvantaged" with the new ruling party. This, later on, resulted in a series of concessions made by the government in, for example, the abandonment of the long-awaited agrarian reform, the paralyzed land redistribution, and the scarce titling of indigenous territories that would materially truncate the historical desire to eliminate *latifundio*[7] (Salazar, 2016; Guzmán, 2017). It was there that the MAS government took a turn that would fracture the so-called "process of change" until this day. The incorporation of peasant and indigenous leaderships and grassroots organizations into the government had been insufficient for the transformation of the colonial state and its close ties with the capitalist logic that still dominated the country. Thus, amid controversies, protests, and deep disappointment from the grassroots movements, the government then headed by Evo Morales began a new stage characterized by many as a "new state order" with more continuities than interruptions to the previous political regimes (Tapia, 2011; Salazar, 2015-2016; Linsalata, 2014). In the following years, and more specifically around 2011, these fissures began to emerge in ever clearer ways until they regulated national politics. From then on, the disillusionment, weakening, and fragmentation of the popular social fabric unmasked the deep governmental contradictions that had reduced the social horizon to a performance (Postero, 2017)—a performance with

[7] Concentration and accumulation of land by a small minority of landholders.

which “the State hoarded the revolutionary narratives (…) to subsume the people’s social struggles and present them as their own in the realm of the State” (Guzmán, 2017: 34).

In his text titled “What Neoliberalism Could Not Do, the MAS Can”, Huascar Salazar (2016) calls attention to the negotiations of the MAS with the old and new dominant sectors to characterize the turn of its political project. The author, in line with what was stated by Luis Tapia, Raquel Gutierrez, and Nancy Postero, among others, affirms that “to consolidate state power, Morales’s government established alliances” with those “interested in reconstituting a stable order of domination” (Salazar, 2016: 636). It is in this way that the MAS government that at some point promised revolution, peoples’ self-determination, and respect for Mother Earth, ended up adopting “the horizons of the large transnational mining and hydrocarbon companies, those of the landowning oligarchy, and those of the other bourgeoisies that were increasingly assuming power, such as those tied to mining and coca production” (Salazar, 2016: 636). One of the clearer examples of this turn could be seen in the government imposition to build a highway through the TIPNIS (Territorio Indigena Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure, Indigenous Territory Parque Nacional Isiboro Secure, for its initials in Spanish) as part of the “economic development incentives” and “integration” of the Amazonian region. This, which gave rise to one of the largest indigenous uprisings in Latin America in rejection of the construction of the highway that crossed the territory “through its heart”, as enunciated by the 63 indigenous communities, was depicted by the government as an imperialist and right wing-backed attempt to undermine the government. Despite the fact that thousands of lowlands and highlands indigenous peoples walked more than 750 miles protesting to defend what they

called “territorio y dignidad” (territory and dignity), the government’s repression both in Chaparina and in La Paz was brutal. Furthermore, several members of the MAS party, Morales included, referred to the indigenous “protesters as backward savages who were creating obstacles to national development” (Postero, 2017: 139). They contended that it was the MAS development model that would “reclaim control of the region and use its resources to redistribute wealth to the poorest people” (Postero, 2017: 139). Followed by years of racist and paternalistic statements that would even fill books such as “‘NGOism’, Infantile Illness of the Right” (2011) and later “Geopolitics of the Amazon, Landed Hereditary Power and Capitalist Accumulation” (2012) the government cartoonized indigenous peoples and their struggles, declared them US infiltrators, and even denied their indigeneity. These events marked Morales’s “process of change”—a process that more than a decade later led the country to a deep political and social crisis. In these expressions that were replicated in indigenous resistances against mega dams such as Rositas or El Bala, the fight against GMO soy expansion in the Amazon, the exploitation of gas in Tariquia, and the expansion of Chinese capital across the country, among others, the MAS government “made it clear that it will sacrifice some indigenous communities to its national development project” (Postero, 2017: 5).

Figure 1: 8th Indigenous march for the protection of Indigenous Territory and National Park Isiboro Sécure (TIPNIS). Photo: CEJIS.

In this way, the Bolivia that many thought would lead the change of the historical expropriation and exploitation of *pachamama* (Mother Earth) and indigenous peoples was unmasked to rather give way to what Postero (2017: 139) characterizes as "a new form of developmentalism based on resource extractivism, industrialization, and commercial agriculture—precisely what the new plurinational Bolivia was supposed to transform". The so-called indigenous revolutionary process, thus, ended up reproducing and deepening with increasing authoritarianism old dynamics of dispossession that allowed only certain expressions of indigeneity while disacknowledging others—specifically those that interrupted the capitalist expansion fostered by the state. In order to understand this transformation that even as I write these lines configures the indigenous peoples and territories of lowlands Bolivia, it is convenient to invoke Argentinian political scientist Veronica Gago's provocation: "it is difficult to believe that the end of neoliberalism depends on a few governments declaring that they have left those policies behind" (Gago,

2017: 11). In her book titled "Neoliberalism from Below" (2017), the author disassembles the processes and discourses of the region's populist governments, and affirms that they support their long-standing presence in power on state-centrist projects that have created dichotomies between the market and the state in an attempt to assert that the latter is "synonymous with the 'end of neoliberalism' in the region" (Gago, 2017: 3). To this Gago (2017) has called "the return of the state"—a return that rendering the state omnipotent, cohesive, and exclusively capable of transformation, has allowed it to enjoy a revitalization that enables its operations without questioning, and even as justifiable, in the name of the fulfillment of social needs. The words of then Vice President Álvaro García Linera, in this context, inevitably come to mind:

> It is a question of building a strong state, which can coordinate in a balanced way the three "economic-productive" platforms that coexist in Bolivia: the community-based, the family-based and the "modern industrial." It is a question of transferring a part of the surplus of the nationalised hydrocarbons [oil and gas] in order to encourage the setting up of forms of self-organization, of self-management and of commercial development that is really Andean and Amazonian. Up to now, these traditional sectors have not been able to develop because of a "modern-industrial" sector that has cornered the surpluses. Our idea is that these traditional sectors should have an economic support, should have access to raw materials and markets, which could then generate prosperity within these artisan and family-based processes. Bolivia will still be capitalist in 50 or 100 years. (Stefanoni, 2005 cited in Postero, 2017: 98).

Bolivia's experience, as shown throughout this chapter, challenges "the idea that neoliberalism's opposite is the return of the state" (Gago, 2017: 12), and offers further evidence on the false division between the political and the economic (Gago, 2017: 10). Following Gago's (2017) approach, to understand neoliberalism it is necessary to comprehend it as a form of organizing life in society whose function is always seeking the

accumulation of capital. As such, and in understanding capitalism within this logical framework, it becomes possible to understand it in its flexible dimension and adaptable to different political and ideological regimes. The entanglements of capitalism and the state, then, show that these are mutually constituted through politics, even when they are presented as antagonistic or contrary to the economic ends it seeks. Thus, in Bolivia as in many other Latin American countries, the strengthening of the state has also required the revitalization of the expropriative productive apparatus that Gago (2017) and Gudynas (2010), among others, call (neo) extractivism and (neo) developmentalism. The processes of these "neos", as the authors analyzed here convene, have progressively shown that Bolivia, far from autonomous or independent from global capitalism, has to respond to its demands even if that means the erosion of its initial political project.

CHINA: RUPTURES AND CONTINUITIES OF IMPERIAL HEGEMONIES IN BOLIVIA AND LATIN AMERICA.

In this context, and recognizing the fiction of disconnection between Bolivia and global capitalist dynamics, China arrived to the country in the guise of anti-imperialist propaganda and presented itself as *the* alternative to the United States. There is no doubt that China's arrival, as well as the broader alignment with capitalist horizons described above, has been instrumental in sustaining the ruling party in power for over 14 years. The rise in the prices of raw materials and commodities, as well as the consolidated credits in the framework of the alliance with China, made possible the social programs and subsidies that became organic to the MAS's political proposal in a context of loss of legitimacy. The revolutionary discourses around China, however, were not enough to obscure the

extractivist and dispossessive impulse that the MAS still upholds as a state policy. Despite being endorsed by anti-imperialist narratives, China's emergence in a privileged position in the strategic sectors of the national economy has led many to question the promises of sovereignty with which China was initially accompanied. In a regional context with highly conflictive populist governments in power, and the fascist ultra-right headed now by Bolsonaro disputing them, China made its expansion upon two key aspects: a voracious interest in the region's natural resources, and a weak state capacity that, tangled with bureaucracy and corruption, was exceeded by the global economic dynamics of which Chinese capital and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) are the pacesetters. To understand the Bolivian case, and more specifically the infrastructure project I analyze here, these two are essential pillars.

Although relations between China and Bolivia date back to 1985 (Ellis, 2016; Zapata, 2019) it was not until 2011 that both countries signed a bilateral cooperation agreement. It was then when, within the frame of the Tupak Katari Satellite System project, China launched an anchor in the country that by 2015 had led to the signing of "over four hundred cooperation, aid, and loan agreements" (Postero, 2017: 104). The Chinese emergence in Bolivia, however, does not respond to a coincidence nor should it be reduced to a political affinity between these two countries. On the contrary, China's increasing presence in Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay, and more recently Colombia, has demonstrated the strategic character of its expansion over Latin America. As an increasing number of authors have pointed out (Ray and Gallagher, 2015; Myers and Wise, 2016; Lee, 2017; Garzon and Castro, 2018; Ray, Gallagher, and

Sanborn, 2019), the last twenty years have been characterized by the discrete but broad expansion of China all over the world. This has led many researchers to affirm that "the 21st century has mainly been the Chinese century"—a century in which, even with the global depression by-product of the COVID-19 pandemic, the country has proven its capacity to recover from the enormous political and economic obstacles of recent years (Myers and Wise, 2016: 1). The Chinese rapid growth as a powerhouse of the global economy, however, has not always been benign. Both Africa and Latin America, as traditional and important raw material providers for the ever-growing demand of powerhouses, have experienced enormous social and environmental impacts associated with the Chinese crossing of regional borders. In the Amazon, in particular, this is putting the livelihoods of hundreds of indigenous communities at risk through the financing of projects that open arteries of depredation of their territories and the rainforest. But, how to understand the emergence of China in the Latin American region and on a global scale?

In his book "A brief history of neoliberalism", geographer David Harvey examines the Chinese case under the label of neoliberalism "with Chinese features", and traces back its emergence as a global economic power to the 1990s. On those years, Harvey (2007) asserts, China started a liberalization process that has had as a key component the so-called 'going out' policy. This policy, tailoring its overseas economic trajectory based on "resource and market-seeking activity by Chinese entities" (Ray, Gallagher, and Sanborn, 2019: 10), has since then kept fostering its spectacular economic growth. This process in which China has become "more dependent upon foreign raw materials and energy" (Harvey, 2007: 139), allows the comprehension of the Asian country as "the world's most

dynamic and successful economy", and as such, its growing openness of frontiers as far away as my site of study: the Amazon. Thus, according to sociologist Ching Kwan Lee (2017: 1), the Chinese rapid expansion experienced in both Africa and Latin America responds to China's "overcapacity, falling profit rates, underconsumption, shrinking demand from traditional export markets, and scarcity of strategic resources [that] are major imbalances that have driven Chinese corporations, workers, and entrepreneurs to go abroad in search of new opportunities". China, despite having arrived late to the Latin American lands that its historical opponents in the West already knew, managed to establish itself today as "South America's largest trading partner, and the second largest for Mexico and Central America" (Gallagher et al, 2019: 8). Of this little-studied relationship, we only know what both Latin American and Chinese governments claim: the Chinese economic engagement with the region coincides with Latin America's fastest economic growth rate since the 1970s (Ray, Gallagher, and Sanborn, 2019: 8). But, what is it that makes China interested in even the smallest economies in the region?

Considering the long and uneven Latin American history with development finance institutions historically led by the West, China's emergent presence attracted the attention of the political factions in power, and was embraced under the premise of cooperating towards making the region something other than raw materials providers for the competing powers. Thus, considering that even today the most prominent financial foreign entities in development projects are the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Latin American Development Bank (CAF) in the energy and infrastructure sectors namely, China was conceived as a "flexible" alternative to the hegemony of the multilateral banks.

This led to the strengthening of the so-called “strategic alliances” in which countries like Bolivia and China signed diplomatic, economic, and political cooperation agreements. Thus, according to Bolivian researcher Adriana Zapata (2019: 272), relations between Bolivia and China grew rapidly until China became “Bolivia’s main bilateral creditor”. Zapata’s analysis also reveals that “since 2014, China has been the main source of imports to Bolivia, which in 2018 amounted to more than US$ 2 billion dollars, a figure that represents 22.2 percent of total imports”. Furthermore, Zapata (2019: 272) continues, “exports from Bolivia [to China] reached US$ 459.5 million dollars in 2018”. Most of these exports were minerals, such as zinc, silver, and tin (Saravia, 2015; Zapata, 2019). In 2017, “these minerals represented 82 percent of the total value of exports to China”, but more is expected with regards to agricultural products given the recently signed agreements with the Chinese government (Zapata, 2019: 272).

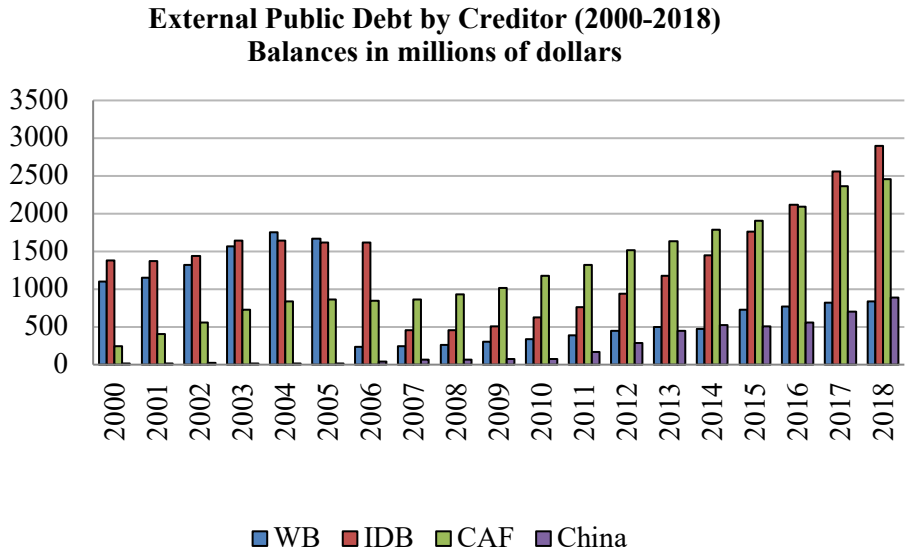

Figure 2: External Public Debt by Creditor (2000-2018). Author's elaboration based on The Dialogue (2020) and Zapata's (2019) data.

As it can be observed through this dynamic, although in Bolivia the strategic alliances with China officially began several decades ago, they have grown considerably until reaching a peak in 2018 and 2019. Currently, the debt with China represents about 10.6 percent of the total national debt contracted, and "71 percent of it was acquired between 2015 and 2018" (Zapata, 2019: 278). In 2018, the Chinese and Bolivian governments, for example, established a strategic partnership that is considered the second highest level of engagement with China (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). With a declaration that includes 22 points, one of the most outstanding aspects of this agreement is related to the opening of markets to Bolivian agricultural products. This, which the following year (2019) was materialized in the export of Bolivia's first 48 tons of meat to

China[8], has served to, among other things, send a message demonstrating the strength of the political-commercial alliance with China. Along the same lines is the signed Memorandum of Understanding in 2019 within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In this Memorandum, the Bolivian representation highlighted the country's strategic position as South America's heart (Ibid, 2019). In this event, it is worth noting, Bolivia reiterated its commitment as pro tempore President of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to further promote reaching the LAC-China joint objectives (China CELAC Forum, 2018).

It is in this way, then, that although initially China had focused its attention on countries traditionally classified as oil-rich, such as Venezuela[9] and Ecuador[10], and on large exporting economies such as Mexico and Brazil, more recently its gaze has focused on countries with smaller economies like Bolivia through projects of mainly—but not limited

[8] By the end of 2020, Bolivian cattle ranchers were aiming to export 20.000 tons of meat to China. Although they only managed to export 10,000, the Instituto Boliviano de Comercio Exterior (Bolivian Institute of Foreign Trade, IBCE for its initials in Spanish) highlighted this as an achievement tied to the opening of the Chinese market—currently the main destination market for Bolivian meat with 80 percent. This raised concerns regarding the increase of deforestation in the Amazonian region. The issues around meat export are further examined in Jemio, M. (2019). Will exporting beef to China cause deforestation in Bolivia? Retrieved from https://dialogochino.net/en/agriculture/28326-will-exporting-beef-to-china-cause-deforestation-in-bolivia/

[9] In Venezuela, both Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro's administration used Chinese finance through the China-Venezuela Joint Fund. For more, see Observatorio de Ecología Política de Venezuela. (2019). Relación China-Venezuela en cuestión: colapso económico, extractivismo y derechos humanos. Available at: https://www.ecopoliticavenezuela.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Dossier-Relacion-China-Venezuela-OEP.pdf

[10] In addition to oil-related extractive activities, the Chinese presence in Ecuador has been strongly felt in the mining sector. Extensive analyses have been written by the Colectivo de Investigación y Acción Psicosocial, Ecuador. (2017). La herida abierta del Cóndor. Quito: El Chasqui ediciones; Sacher, W. (2017). Ofensiva megaminera china en los Andes. Acumulación por desposesión en el Ecuador de la 'Revolución Ciudadana'. Quito: Abya Yala Ediciones; and Sociology PhD candidate at the University of Texas at Austin Peng, R. (2015). Constructing Hydropower: Labor Control in Chinese Transnational Hydroelectric Projects in Ecuador.

to—infrastructure. This is related, among other things, to the niche of widespread infrastructure deficiency in the Latin American region, and the ways in which this determines the profitability of economic dynamics in and with the region. Thus, the political synergies between the Chinese state and the Latin American governments with the so-called 21st century socialist, gave the green light to a series of alliances that today, after a decade of progressive adjustments of the Chinese arrival in Latin America, make possible to affirm that "infrastructure development has become a main feature of Chinese activity in Latin America" (Ray, Gallagher, and Sanborn, 2019: 10).

In this context, and making a close up specifically to the Amazon, it is possible to find commonalities among Ecuador, Bolivia, and Peru—the main recipients of infrastructure loans and credits by China (Ray et al, 2015; Ray, Gallagher, and Sanborn, 2019). In these countries, the Chinese companies in charge of project implementation have advanced at an accelerated pace and without hesitation on highly conflictive areas in social and environmental terms. China's banks such as the Chinese Export Import Bank of China (EXIMBANK) or the Chinese Development Bank (CDB) —the only two present in Bolivia—have actively and extensively financed projects in wide ranging sectors, including highways, bridges, and Hydroelectric mega-dams. In Ecuador, for example, "CDB provided a US$ 2 billion credit to the Ecuadorian government in 2016 for broad infrastructure support", in Brazil[11] important electricity transmission deals were financed,

[11] Brazil is China's most important trade partner in Latin America. It is remarkable how despite Bolsonaro's explicit far-right and pro-US politics, China has remained well positioned in their binational commercial dynamics. The Brazilian case demonstrates the Chinese stability and long-term strategic position in relation to, for example, the Brazilian soy and agro-exporter economy. The COVID-19 outbreak

and in the Bolivian case, sixth among the recipients of Chinese financing in the region, infrastructure is "the most significant destination for Chinese financing (51 percent of its total)" (Zapata, 2019: 281). According to the Bolivian Highways Administration (Administradora Boliviana de Carreteras, ABC, for its initials in Spanish), since 2016 China is one of its "primary sources of financing, reaching the first place with 35 percent of the total approved budget in 2018" (Zapata, 2019: 281) Today, with China as the most important commercial partner, it is safe to assume that everyone knows of whom we talk about when the names of companies such as Sinohydro, CAMC, China Harzone, Sinopec, China Harbor Engineering, China Railway Construction Corporation (International Limited) (CRCC), China International Water Electric Corp (CWE), Jungie Mining Industry S.R.L., or China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) are brought up.

that has affected negatively Brazil, as in the rest of the countries in the region, has deepened these relations and acquired a conciliatory tone even with right-wing governments such as the Brazilian one.

Project	Year	Amount	Lender	Borrower	Sector	Sensitive territory overlaps
El Espino - Charagua - Boyuibe highway	2015	$253M	ExImBank	Government	Transport	● Within Indigenous Peoples' Lands ● Within Critical Habitats ● Within National Protected Areas
El Sillar highway	2015	$426M	ExImBank	Government	Transport	● Within Critical Habitats ● Within National Protected Areas
El Mutun steel project	2016	$396M	ExImBank	Government	Other construction	Within Critical Habitats
Rurrenabaque-Riberalta roadway	2015	$600M	ExImBank	Government	Transport	● Within Indigenous Peoples' Lands ● Within Critical Habitats ● Within National Protected Areas
Rositas Hydroelectric Power Plant	2016	$1000M	ExImBank	ENDE	Power	● Within Critical Habitats ● Within National Protected Areas
Drilling Rig Export	2009	$60M	ExImBank	Government	Extraction, pipelines	None Known
Trade support: Chinese satellite	2010	$251M	CDB	Government	Telecom	None Known
Trade support: Chinese helicopters	2011	$300M	CDB	Government	Transport	None Known
Trade support: Chinese buses	2012	$100M	ExImBank	Government	Transport	None Known
Citizen security control project	2016	$53M	ExImBank	Government	Government	None Known

Table 1: Bolivia's most important projects in China's Overseas Development Finance: Geospatial Data for Analysis of Biodiversity and Indigenous Lands data base.
Source: Ray, R., Gallagher, K., Kring, W., Pitts, J. and B. Simmons, A. (2020). Online database. Available at: https://www.bu.edu/gdp/chinas-overseas-development-finance/

It is undoubted, at this point, that the relationship between China and Latin America includes multiple and complex factors at play that exceed analyzes reduced to national

borders or a US-centered reading. The synergies between the states to which I refer, furthermore, cannot be understood without the accompaniment of the broad Chinese diplomatic and political-cultural deployment that goes from cultural exchanges to military support (Molina, 2018; Ellis, 2016). Even though, for example, the extensive opening of Confucius Institutes may seem a tangential element or even alien to the case that I propose here, these have accompanied the consolidation of China's position as Bolivia's top ally with open doors and very few restrictions even in the most 'delicate' national matters. The region's political processes, then, as I attempt to illustrate through the Bolivian case, play an important role in China's expansion not only in the form of credits and trade, but because they let us see the hint of a potential nascent empire. In this sense, Latin American political processes, historically characterized by their instability and conflict, are not a minor detail. The ascendance of China in the global economy has been presented as a good fit in conditions such as the Bolivian one, whose political continuity was largely determined by the social programs derived from foreign commercial exchanges with Chinese cooperation.

It is in this context, then, that I place events such as the one that took place in Bolivia by the end of 2015. In this, the Bolivian government announced the opening of a portfolio of US$ 7,500 million dollars from the EXIMBANK for the financing of large infrastructure projects fostered by China (Molina, 2018). Being China Bolivia's main bilateral creditor "with 15 loans that add up to a contracted debt of US $ 2.09 billion dollars between 2004 and 2018" (Zapata, 2019: 273), the data exposes that the Bolivian government and the EximBank have reached, until the first quarter of 2018 alone, "the consolidation of financing agreements of US$ 973.4 million for three projects", an amount with which "the

total debt with China ascended to US$ 2,121.6 million by January of 2018" (Molina and Herrera , 2018: 18). This, in addition to being an alarming figure for the Bolivian economy, considering the Bolivian geographic location and the challenges it represents in terms of trade, poses questions about the execution of the financed projects. As part of the agreement reached, guidelines and conditionalities associated with the so-called Chinese credit line were established. Among others, the Bolivian government agreed that each project to be financed by said credit had to be negotiated and approved individually, and that these must be implemented exclusively by Chinese companies (Molina, 2018: 18).

Projects like the one I study in the Bolivian Amazon, thus, are neither designed nor decided upon domestically. Despite efforts to present China as an actor without interference in the politics of the host country, the Chinese conditionalities require the execution of projects with their supplies, machines, workers, and companies. This in turn is accompanied by other conditionalities established as accommodations made by national governments to facilitate and incentivize the implementation of projects financed by China. In the Bolivian case, for example, Supreme Decree 2574 was launched on November 3, 2015 with the specific objective of facilitating the contracting of Chinese projects as was signed within the financing framework agreed with Eximbank earlier that year. "This Supreme Decree", the official document reads, "is intended to authorize the contracting of works, goods and services, under specific procedures and conditions for the execution of projects to be financed within the framework of Loan Contracts to be subscribed between the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Export and Import Bank of the People's Republic of China—EXIMBANK" (Bolivia, 2015). This conditional framework, thus, ensures that

only the companies or accidental associations with majority capital from individuals or legal entities of the People's Republic of China take place in public tenders (Bolivia, 2015).

In addition to Supreme Decree 2574, Bolivian researchers Silvia Molina and Viviana Herrera (2018) point out that these conditionalities were registered primarily in the following ways. On the one hand, it was agreed that the projects financed and/or implemented by Chinese companies would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and not in accordance with specific and concrete regulations. On the other hand, it was determined that for the Chinese-financed and implemented projects, the "turnkey" contracting modality would be incorporated. This modality would give the Chinese companies the entire responsibility for the feasibility assessments, construction, equipment, social and environmental licenses, and execution of projects without State intervention (Molina and Herrera, 2018). Under this regulatory framework, and with the increasing tendency to authoritarianism and the expansion of extractive borders of the Bolivian and Chinese governments, these measures set the conditions for what would later be reflected in the daily life of the communities and workers in the form of abuses and violation of labor, environmental, and social rights. These regulatory guidelines, then, reducing the country's ability to make independent decisions, registered enormous impediments in terms of access to information with transparency for monitoring and mediation of external actors in the financed projects. Directly, this gave companies total freedom to determine the objectives, scope, and cycles, among others, in the projects that they implement. These conditions, as Molina and Herrera (2018: 10) state, make it clear that "investment priorities and decisions

at the project level respond to China's geopolitical strategy"—a strategy that has expressed its interest in accessing mining, oil, and lithium reserves in the country.

Thus, the aforementioned general recognition of companies' names has not necessarily been associated with their positive features. Although some US-based specialists in the relationship between China and Latin America highlight the advantages that China offers to the region (Ray et al, 2015; Ray, Gallagher, and Sanborn, 2019) and assert that everything is in the hands of local governments, social conflicts around the violation of national labor and environmental laws in cases like the Bolivian one have clouded its presence. Thus, the more than 460 complaints (OBESS, 2016) filed until 2016 against Chinese companies in the country have raised alarms even in international human rights commissions. Both the media and my experience in the field have allowed me to see the precarious conditions generated in the places where Chinese companies work. Thus, although in the community I study the complaints have been related to mistreatment, insults, and breach of contracts, none of the cases have gone as far as those registered in other parts of the country. Among the most serious reported cases is the one in which a Chinese supervisor threw hot water to a Bolivian worker, burning his face and shoulder. The Chinese supervisor said he did this under the excuse that the Bolivian worker referred to the Chinese employee by his nickname and not by his first name (Erbol, 2017). Although the Bolivian worker in this case was hospitalized and seriously burned, the Labor Office decided to fine the company Sinohydro only 70.000 Bolivian pesos (US$ 10.000), for eight

labor violations and violations against Bolivians[12] (La Razón, 2017). After protests by civil society, the Chinese worker who attacked the Bolivian worker was fired and sent back to China. A complaint of workers in Bulo-Bulo was given a similar treatment as the case mentioned above. In this region, a Chinese worker suddenly hopped on a tractor and tried to run over the Bolivian workers that were resting and taking a break just a few meters away. According to the Chinese worker, he did this because he wanted to pressure the workers that, in his words, were taking too long of a break (Erbol, 2016).

In a different region, the CRCC company was reported indicating that the workers were insulted and abused permanently. This situation, however, escalated when one of the Chinese foremen, after kicking a Bolivian worker, "grabbed a construction combo and tried to give a blow" to him (Erbol, 2017). Similar was the case of one of the workers who filed a different complaint against another company for attempted homicide. The Bolivian worker reported that "the foreigner insulted him because he supposedly did not work", that the Chinese employee hit him with his fists, "grabbed him by the neck and left a wound when I have tried to get free" (Erbol, 2017). In this case, the forensic evaluation stated that the Bolivian had been "a victim of physical assault with a blunt object on the head and an

[12] See Erbol (2017). Sinohydro echó a chino que lanzó agua hervida a boliviano. Available at: https://anteriorportal.erbol.com.bo/noticia/economia/11042017/sinohydro_echo_chino_que_lanzo_agua_hervida_boliviano.
For more on this, see La Razón (2017). Empleador chino que arrojó agua hervida en la cara de un obrero boliviano es expulsado del país. Available at: https://www.la-razon.com/sociedad/2017/04/12/empleador-chino-que-arrojo-agua-hervida-en-la-cara-de-un-obrero-boliviano-es-expulsado-del-pais/
A compilation of this has been published by Plataforma Energética (2017). Empresa Sinohydro echó a chino que lanzó agua hervida a obrero boliviano. Available at: https://plataformaenergetica.org/china/china-en-bolivia/empresas-de-china/empresa-sinohydro-echo-a-chino-que-lanzo-agua-hervida-a-obrero-boliviano-11-4-2017/

attempted strangulation". With a final diagnosis of head, neck, and psychological trauma (Erbol, 2017), the worker received a request from the company to negotiate the suppression of the complaint. In this way, companies such as China Railway, China Water Electric (CWE), among others, have been denounced for brutally beating Bolivian workers[13], hiring more Chinese than Bolivian personnel[14], the absence of official contracts that fostered impunity and vulnerability in workers[15], working days of 15 hours or more[16], extremely precarious camp conditions, brutalizing Chinese workers, failure to provide food as required by law, and more recently forced labor without medical attention to workers with COVID-19[17].

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[13] See Unitel TV Bolivia. (2019). "Obreros bolivianos denuncian pésimo trato de empresa china desde hace 4 años" for complaints in the Rurrenabaque-Riberalta highway constructed by China Railway. Available at: https://youtu.be/sbU3e-YH-9o
A similar case was reported at the Cochabamba-Paracaya highway built by China Harzone Industry Corp. Ltd. For more see Los Tiempos (2018). "Trabajadores de doble vía al valle alto denuncian agresiones de empresa china". Available at: https://youtu.be/8PbETj5gva0

[14] The third Article of the General Labor Law states that companies, national or foreign, must have a maximum of 15 percent of foreign personnel. The leaders and unions' complaints indicate that in Chinese companies there are approximately 35 percent of workers, if not more. For more see Opinión (2017). 100 empresas chinas trabajan en el país y 35 por ciento de empleados es asiático. Available at: https://www.opinion.com.bo/articulo/informe-especial/100-empresas-chinas-trabajan-pa-iacute-s-35-ciento-empleados-es-asi-aacute-tico/20170212000400674395.html

[15] The China Railway company's workers obtained the signing of contracts, access to work clothes or uniforms, and some items of labor protection after several protests. Access to health care and food, as indicated by the Bolivian labor law, has not yet been solved. For more see Ministerio de Trabajo (2018). "Trabajadores de la Empresa China Railway". Available at: https://youtu.be/RVlOLAKvaaE.
For more on similar compaints, see Erbol (2018). Beni: Denuncian agresiones de chinos a obreros bolivianos. Available at: https://anteriorportal.erbol.com.bo/noticia/social/03022018/beni_denuncian_agresiones_de_chinos_obreros_bolivianos

[16] See El Diario. (2016). "Cancillería conoce atropello de empresa china a obreros". Available at: https://www.eldiario.net/noticias/2016/2016_03/nt160307/economia.php?n=27&-cancilleria-conoce-atropello-de-empresa-china-a-obreros

[17] Recent complaints have shown that the workers that build the San Ignacio de Moxos-San Borja highway in which my study is centered were denied medical attention and rest even presenting symptoms of COVID-19. The workers claimed there were no conditions for their recovery, work breaks, nor treatment of their symptoms, such as high fevers. For more, see Página Siete (2020). Trabajadores que construyen la carretera San Ignacio de Moxos-San Borja tienen síntomas de COVID.

In this regard, although women's voices were not brought to the public stage, in my previous fieldwork in 2017 many of them denounced the constant shouting, pushing, breaching of payments, and humiliation they experienced with Chinese companies and workers to whom they offered cooking and cleaning services:

> *"'Una señora que les vende la comida nos ha contado que el chino que les compra se enojó, no se sabe por qué, y lo sacó todo y lo quebró todo. Creo que no le gustó la comida, que le pasaría pues. […] La segunda vez ella iba a cobrar su sueldo, y le llevó la planilla, […] y le dijo 'ustedes tienen que pagarme, yo no tengo nada para darles de comer mañana ya', y se lo quito, y lo rompió en su delante y le lanzó los pedacitos en su cara' (Paz, Dirigente CPMBE – Comunidad El Retiro)"* (Guzmán, 2018: 132).
>
> ("'A lady who sells food to them has told us that the Chinese who buys them got angry, it is not known why, and took everything out and broke everything. I think he did not like the food. […] The second time she was going to collect her salary, and she brought her the payroll, […] and told them 'you have to pay me, I don't have anything to feed you tomorrow', and they took the payroll away and broke it in front of her and threw the pieces to her face' (Paz, CPMBE Leader-El Retiro Community)")

Events like these that are constant in daily interactions generate great fears among the women and children of the populations in which they take place. Children, I have learned through ethnographic observation, often witness the explosions of violence against their parents crying, with fear, and trying to hide when witnessing abuses perpetrated by the companies. Nine years old Marcelo[18], for instance, told me that he had already talked about the abuses against his mother with her. He had told her that if *"a los chinos no les gusta la comida, que se vayan y no vuelvan"* ("the Chinese do not like food, they should

[18] All the names of the indigenous people here referenced have been changed to protect their identities and guarantee anonymity.

leave and not come back") (Guzmán, 2018: 132). This child expressed that the company's employees, especially those of Chinese nationality, are "mean" with his family, but that he is less and less afraid of them. This aspect will be analyzed in the next chapters in greater detail.

As stated above, another fundamental component of the complaints against Chinese companies is related to the impact of their presence in the environmental sphere. Chinese companies in Bolivia and the region, then, have not only become known for violating environmental regulations with no restrictions through the felling of trees in unauthorized areas[19], the pollution of areas with toxic waste, or simply disregarding the protocols contemplated in projects such as those they implement. Chinese companies, on the contrary, have capitalized on the conditions created by the flexibilization (if not complete absence) of national regulation to unfold a series of illicit predatory dynamics. Thus, in the Bolivian Amazon, the Chinese presence generated connections that quickly led to an explosive and fierce wildlife trafficking. Among the most prominent and alarming cases of these due to its effects on local indigenous communities is the trafficking of jaguar fangs. According to national reports, in 2014 in the Madidi National Park, a Chinese citizen

[19] One of the most prominent cases was the illegal deforestation that the Chinese company Sinohydro carried out on the edge of the Surutú River in the Department of Santa Cruz. In this, 6.8 hectares of forest were cleared. The company claimed to be unaware that this was against national environmental regulations, or that special authorizations were required for the felling of trees. Shortly after, due to the elimination of the natural bank of the river that protected the surrounding communities, they were affected with floods and loss of their material assets. This case was penalized for being considered a forest crime, and the Chinese company that built a highway near that area was prosecuted and fined for the damage caused. For more, see Erbol (2017). Autoridad Boliviana de Bosques (ABT) will initiate proceedings against Chinese company for deforesting. Available at: https://anteriorportal.erbol.com.bo/noticia/social/04012017/abt_iniciara_proceso_contra_empresa_china_por_deforestar

placed an advertisement on the radio to buy jaguar fangs (SERNAP, 2014-2020). This citizen, being a Mandarin and Spanish speaker, had contacted the companies' workers in the region to commercialize the very valuable jaguar fangs in China. From that moment on, the presence of hunters of Chinese nationality became notable. However, due to the knowledge of the jaguars' movements in the jungle, later on some indigenous people were articulated to the hunt attracted by the compensation offered—the Chinese hunters pay between US$ 100 and US$ 150 per fang. This later resulted in the criminalization of some indigenous people who participated in the hunt, and the Chinese citizens involved were left in impunity. Shortly after, the consequences of this were seen in the death of 324 jaguars (Verheij, 2019: 20) whose bodies were defragmented in skull, skin, and fangs. On this, it is worth noting, very little has been researched regarding the impact of the jaguar sacrifice for the Amazonian indigenous cosmovision.

"Se compran colmillos de tigre" (Tiger fangs are bought), read a sign on the door of a *polleria*[20] owned by two Chinese citizens in the famous "La Ramada" market in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, where 185 jaguar fangs, bags with their skins, and guns and rifles were discovered along with large sums of money (Berton, 2018). According to conservationist organizations, the IUCN (2019), Oxford Biologist researchers, and the Bolivian government, posters and flyers are being distributed in rural areas "by Chinese citizens working in Bolivia" (Romo, 2020) as the African supplies are in decline. Their reports highlight the "relationship between Chinese investment in infrastructure projects and

[20] A restaurant that mainly sells chicken.

trafficking of the feline" in areas concentrated precisely in my site of study: Beni, Bolivia (Ibid). In their data, the researchers affirm that "between 2014 and 2016 some 760 fangs were seized in Bolivia", of which "the Bolivian Postal Service (ECOBOL) alone discovered 300 of these in 16 packages headed for Asia" (Ibid). Moreover, of these, "119 fangs were seized by customs authorities in Beijing, China" (Verheij, 2019: 20). Although the situation in the years after the first radio announcement resulted in the investigation and prosecution of 21 traffickers (General Direction of Biodiversity, 2020; Ministry of Environment, 2020), by the end of 2020 only five of them have been sentenced. Meanwhile, the decline of the jaguar population in the Amazon in a context of ravaging expansion of the agricultural and livestock frontier, the devastating fires of recent years, and illegal hunting has raised concerns about the already reduced population of felines in the country. None of these concerns had been addressed effectively by the national authorities. Conversely, then President Evo Morales's words claimed that "Bolivians who protest against China and its companies are neoliberal, they want privatizations to return, [and the] capitalist model"[21] (La Razón, 2016).

These conflicts that have characterized the settlement of Chinese companies in Latin American territories, however, have not been exclusive to Bolivia. Recently, both Mexico and Peru have reported similar impacts on the massive hunting of jaguars in indigenous territories where Chinese investments are based (Melgoza, 2020). In Ecuador,

[21] See La Razón. (2016). Morales dice que protestas contra China y sus empresas vienen de neoliberales. Available at: https://www.la-razon.com/nacional/2016/10/07/morales-dice-que-protestas-contra-china-y-sus-empresas-vienen-de-neoliberales/

another effect associated with the expansion of Chinese capital has manifested itself in the Galapagos Islands with the massive fishing of sharks. This case, which has also been experienced in Peru, has used the limited territorial zoning of these areas to anchor large vessels with fuel, processing and storage plants that allow them to remain outside the protected delimitation for months without moving. This strategic positioning has allowed them to fish any animal that crosses the area without restrictions. Although this once again takes advantage of both national and international legal vacuums, the Chinese government's silence continues to attract attention. Along similar lines to what was said in the Bolivian case, the Chinese authorities have affirmed that there is nothing they can do to control this type of overseas activity. "China's position has been neutral. They told us that the biggest intervention they could make was to recommend their citizens not to consume these products", affirmed the researchers interviewed by the Diálogo Chino magazine in 2020. It is worth noting at this point that these conflicts that began due to their devastating effects in local territories, economies, and community lives, have rapidly escalated to xenophobic and racist expressions widely spread on social media, local, and national TV. Similar to the anti-China expressions made around the COVID-19 outbreak against Asian people, the consumption of jaguar fangs and shark fins has further stigmatized a population of racialized workers that live in extremely precarious conditions. In this sense, there is still much to understand and reconcile. At the moment, for the local populations that day to day live with the consequences of the Chinese dragon's arrival to their territories, it is difficult to believe that everything responds to a demand for traditional medicine, as the Chinese authorities claim.

FRONTIER-MAKING: CAPITALISM'S CRISIS AND ITS EXPANSIONIST DRIVES.

In this chapter I have proposed to weave a bridge between the bodies of knowledge of different fronts and scales in order not only to destabilize the "revolutionary" and "sovereign" narratives around China, but rather to contribute to the understanding of capitalism and its dynamics of expansion beyond national constituencies. In this context, and as mentioned at the beginning of the previous section, though the Latin American region and the Amazon in particular is still considered an inaccessible site for finance by capitalism in general, this has not stopped including it in their expansion plans such as the famous China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In fact, much of the Belt and Road Initiative launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013 as a central strategy for Chinese internationalization, relies on infrastructure projects in the South American region and the Amazon. For this reason, a few years ago the Chinese government began to refer to Latin America as an "indispensable" and "natural extension" region of the BRI—an intention that could be seen more clearly in the five proposals that shape the China-LAC relations plan outlined at the CELAC forum in 2018. Thinking of the Amazon, in this context, evokes geographers Jason Moore (2015) and Antonio Augusto Rossotto Ioris's (2020) analysis of capitalist expansion as a frontier-making process that responds to the permanent crisis of accumulation endemic to capitalism.

In his book "Frontier making in the Amazon", Antonio Augusto Rossotto Ioris (2020) proposes a fertile conceptual framework to think about the processes that today, contrary to the imaginaries that conceive the jungle as isolated, have made the Amazon a predilect space for international dynamics. Although some of this was already stated in

some historical accounts around the 1970s in which the Bolivian jungle was described with Okinawan, Menonite, Brasilian, and indigenous presence (Nobbs-Thiessen, 2020; Orsag, 2018), the Amazon has been historically conceived "a basket of manifold riches and a window to some of the most challenging problems of modernity" (Ioris, 2020: 9). It is this quality, clearly sustained up to the present, that makes it pertinent to review the concept of frontiers in the terms proposed by both Moore and Ioris. What do they mean when they think of the Amazon as a frontier of capitalism? "Etymologically", writes Ioris (2020: 2), a "frontier is something that is 'in front', an area that is part of the whole that is ahead in the hinterland or in a foreign location. A frontier is outward-oriented (i.e. directed towards outlying areas that are both a source of danger and a desired prize)", or as I like to think of it, as the demarcation of a conquerable site. Through this lens, then, it is possible to affirm that the gaze of the Amazon as "an area 'out there' to be governed, beyond history and existing politics, available to be explored and governed according to various possible approaches", operates as a precondition on which the impulse of the capitalist expansion unleashes (Ioris, 2020: 12). It is in areas like these, therefore, that the perennial movements of capitalism clearly evidenced in the Chinese case occupy and appropriate spaces, transform landscapes, and discipline spatialities that allow them not only to reproduce and perpetuate their dynamics with few disruptions (if any), but also to re-create the center—that is China itself, and around which gravitate decisions of the social, economic, political, and ecological world (Moore, 2015; Ioris, 2020).

It is precisely that characteristic of the notion of frontier that has awakened my interest. The flexibility of this concept allows me to move pivotally to see simultaneously

the Amazon as a frontier, and China as a new core without necessarily falling into the center-periphery dichotomy. Thinking China as a new core in this dialectical dynamic illustrates not only the capacity of the expansionist drive of capital that spatially re-orders everything around it to make possible the continuation of its economic, social, political, and ecological regime ignoring the failures, contradictions, and limitations that forced them to move away in the first place. It also allows us to see its camouflageable features to functionally adapt within political frameworks of left or right indistinctly at this stage of the world's capitalism. In this sense, in Moore's (2011) piece titled "Transcending the Metabolic Rift", I find a key concept to complement and better illustrate what I attempt to address in these lines. The approach to the capitalist world system that I have been developing through the notion of the frontier, in Moore (2011) evolves into what he calls "world ecology". This concept, contrary to what other Marxist theorists have affirmed, posits that capitalism *is* (not has) an ecological regime that "signifies the historically stabilized process and conditions of extended accumulation" (Moore, 2011: 34). From his vast and complex theorization of nature and ecology in capitalism, I borrow the lens of what he theorized as "the uncapitalized nature". Reading the Amazon through this lens opens a window to understand the Chinese crisis enunciated by Lee (2017) earlier in this chapter, and the Amazon's role in the articulation of it. In this sense, China's presence in Bolivia and Latin America reveal a new stage of the world ecological crisis that forces the expansion of frontiers that allow the accumulation of surplus. In a Ioris-inspired way of putting it, these fluxes respond to the need to transfer the contradictions of their own regimes to other areas. It is an attempt to "mitigate and ameliorate the troubles and

insufficiencies that characterize the politico-economic centers from where people, capital and institutions originated" to rather install "built-in obsolescence and fleeting hopes of renewal" (Ioris, 2020: 1). The Amazon, thus, represents a new "opportunity for the appropriation of human and extra-human nature" (Moore 2011, 26) required for capitalist proliferation.

Following Moore's proposal of "the frontier strategy of capitalism" and its links with "appropriation", moreover, it is possible to think of the Amazonian region and the projects that China is deploying in it as a frontier-making process. This is a frontier in the process of being made crossable, navigable, and in more than one way, penetrable. It is worth remarking that the infrastructure projects financed almost exclusively by China, or "fixes of capitalism" in Moore (2011) and Harvey's (2006b) words, do not exist in isolation nor in a vacuum. On the contrary, they are part of complexes that make capitalist powers mobile, and therefore, expandable. As has become clear throughout this chapter, then, Bolivia's role in China's expansion is not restricted to its national borders, but rather articulated as a node of the ever-growing capitalization of world nature. It is interesting, at this point, to pay attention to the existing resonances between Moore, Ioris, and anthropologist Aihwa Ong's (2006) approach of the Asian rapid growth. For Ong, who has identified the Asian and Chinese expansion through the creation of economic zones, the Amazon can be understood as a fragment of an arranged territoriality of capital "for experiments in economic freedom" (Ong 2006, 19) that aim to mitigate crises. It is not a coincidence, then, the Chinese interest in financing Bolivia's proposed bioceanic railroad of approximately US$ 15 billions, nor it is the proposed inclusion of Bolivia as a member

of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Rather, this constitutes an example of what Moore (2015: 87) refers to when he states that the "great secret and the great accomplishment of capitalist civilization has been to not pay its bills. Frontiers made that possible".

In dialogue with these authors, and bearing in mind that historically China has been the target of Western colonialism and imperialism, it is important to affirm that the conflicts previously analyzed, far from being an exclusive quality of China, are a portrait of the new capitalist, colonialist, extractivist, and as will be seen later, patriarchal horizons of both old and new empires. The relevance of exposing the new conditionalities crafted around China in Bolivia and Latin America, thus, does not aim to reify a binary analysis between two nations in a center-periphery relationship. Rather, it attempts to look at the features and terms that tailor and compose a potential emerging empire. Imagining this in a greater scalar magnitude, even without revealing unseen things in a world that has always been in dispute for hegemony by powerhouses, invites us to imagine and recognize capitalism even when it is presented in other terms and less conventional ways. Unraveling the notion of frontier-making is essential to understand the agile deployment of Chinese capitalism, and perhaps in the near future, to outline the decentralization of "the Chinese" part of it. In the end, the focus on the "Strange case of China" as Harvey (2006b: 34-35) calls it in his text "Spaces of Global Capitalism", could be just an exercise to think about the "unintended consequences of the neoliberal turn in the advanced capitalist world".

CUERPO-TERRITORIO: AN INDIGENOUS THEORY.

All of the processes discussed above, as I briefly outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, are deeply spatial, and as such, dynamic and multi-scalar in ways difficult to be grasped by top-down and disembodied perspectives only. I, for this reason, connect the notion of the frontier with that of the body and of the "web of life" in an attempt to de-romanticize and also de-dichotomize the resistances and perspectives from below with respect to the existing approaches from above. Conversely, and recognizing that these are not mutually exclusive, in the following chapters of this thesis I propose to think of Moore's famous "web of life" in feminist terms. This, writing from, on, and with the body, allows us to see what is inscribed in the lives behind these complex processes of capitalism with its contradictions, threats, wounds, and opportunities. Understanding that historically the development engine and the processes carried by it are not gender, race, or, as I show here, age-neutral (Composto y Navarro, 2014; Hernández, 2016; Barragán, 2019, Goeman, 2013; Smith, 2005), it is necessary to look closely at the multiplicity of its effects on the bodies and lives of those who experience them in an intimate way. But, what can a feminist lens of capitalist expansion, "socialist" governments, and their colonial and extractivist political regimes offer? The knowledge and lived memories of indigenous and peasant women that to this day fight for their right to live well and with dignity offer rich testimonies on this. In inhabiting, embodying, and practicing the activities and spaces overlooked and taken for granted in daily life, women make, live, and experience space in different ways. It is in the interconnections between their home, territory, communitarian,

local, national, and increasingly global politics as well, that women shake up and unsettle the fixed narratives of *glocalized* processes.

Guatemalan indigenous theorist Gladys Tzul Tzul (2015), in dialoguing with Silvia Federici, explains this with clarity. She states that indigenous women's lives are key to understand "the racial-economic functioning of capitalism" where "racism works like an economic-political machine" (Tzul Tzul, 2015: 92). This machine that I like to think of as a frontier-making apparatus, when read through the lens of indigenous and communitarian feminist theories is indivisible and indistinguishable from the colonialism and patriarchy that together with capitalism, make up a dispossession engine. The reading of this interwovenness that suggests the incomprehensibility of some dynamics without the others puts the body at the fore as the place of articulation of all experiences of oppression and violence (Guzmán, 2014). It is through the forms and intensities in which (in) the body is experienced, then, that the effects of even the processes that seem apart from the body become knowable. It is in this way that the body seizes the centrality of the indigenous feminist theorists' postulates. As is seen in Cabnal (2010) and Guzmán (2014), however, they do not refer to a body circumscribed in individuality. On the contrary, they speak of a body that finds its agency as a subject in the communitarian collectivity. This corporeality to which I refer, furthermore, is not exclusively metaphorical, but rather embodied from and towards the territory, dialectically. The communitarian embodiment proposed by indigenous feminists, in the context of my study, offers the coordinates of a compass to walk through the amalgams of the memories of the skin, the hair, the sounds, the colors,

the languages, and of the land or territory. Stemming from this, Maya-Xinkan Lorena Cabnal builds the theory of "body-territory" in which this work is centered.

Lorena Cabnal's (2010) approach proposes an understanding of the body-territory, in one word, as a unitary space where, with, and in which experiences are lived in continuity. As she asserts, it is through this conceptual mechanism that the comprehension of the "historical and oppressive violence [that] exists for both my first territory-body, as well as for my historical territory, the land" that the indigenous women's experiences can be approached (Cabnal, 2010: 23). From this angle, and already enunciating the territory as a space embraced and lived as her own, Cabnal contends that oppressions and violence exceed the binaries of outside and inside to acquire an embodied dimension that encompasses both the body and the territory as one. Centering the racialized and gendered indigenous bodies that are rendered disposable and capable of "endur[ing] everything", Cabnal (2018) asserts that indigenous women's bodies, as much as the land, "become disputable territories" in contexts of extraction of resources and development projects. The sense woven by Cabnal, furthermore, aligns with the approaches of other native scholars such as Andrea Smith (2005). In her book titled "Conquest", Smith (2005) examines a connection between patriarchy and colonialism, and their relationship to the accumulation of capital. Smith's work with Native American women challenges us to think of the aggressions inscribed on indigenous women's bodies and their lands beyond individual and isolated cases, to rather see them as complex interwoven expropriations. These, the author asserts, exhibit that the project of colonial "violence establishes the ideology that native bodies are inherently violable—and by extension, that Native lands are also inherently

violable" (Smith, 2005: 12). It is inspired in this notion that composes a collective and intergenerationally shared indigenous memory, that Cabnal (2010: 23) enounces the meaning of living the "territorio cuerpo-tierra" (territory body-land). This is the concept that later became recognized as "body-territory" by grassroots organizations of indigenous, black, and Latin American feminists across the region in resistance processes against industrial and extractive activities (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017; Colectivo de Geografía Crítica de Ecuador, 2018; Zaragocín and Caretta, 2020). In the organizing processes fostered by and around this concept, these organizations questioned not only the violent and colonial genealogies engendered in the political regimes of extractivism and developmentalism. Today they are also making room for transnational alliances between indigenous women, especially from the global south, whose links are being strengthened by weaving bridges between their bodies, territories, and knowledge.

The deployment and imprint of the body-territory concept, as will be seen in more detail in the following chapters, has inspired and delineated my research with the indigenous women and girls of Santa Ana de Museruna. My work, aiming to exercise decolonizing feminism in the practice, led me to push the conceptual limits towards concrete actions in the field. As such, I aimed to feel the multiple layers in which the notion of the body-territory encompasses and contributes to the epistemological construction of an indigenous feminist geography. Thus, by putting the body-territory at the center, not only the lessons learned in the field since 2016 around the defense of water, the protection of forests, and the resistance to mega-dams acquired a vibrant and intimate political sense,

but also allowed me to decenter the notion of the "environment" as a unit of analysis. In doing this, I was able to re-codify the approaches to these issues by refusing to play the "environmentalist" game and subsume myself to its rules, its terms, and its universalizing "rights" and state-centered agendas (Rocheleau, 1996; Escobar, 1995: 204). Furthermore, although it is undoubted that the genealogy of my thought, practice, and proposal has its origins in the discussions of the historical and structural wounds of capitalism and colonialism, I try not to render them fixed, homogeneous, and almighty. As thinkers of the global south like Gustavo Esteva have examined, there is a danger in centering capitalism and rendering it a coherent and invincible monster. Positions like these have the risk of reducing indigenous bodies and lives to entities without agency, or mere products of macro-structural dynamics. Behind this, in addition to a deterministic myopia with a totalizing tendency, there is a colonial paternalism that I aim to distance myself from. It is precisely this, as I show in the following chapters, that leads me to focus my research on the traces of the maps made by indigenous Amazonian girls. In doing this, I not only move away from the thought of the space body and territory as an empty container or a surface, as Massey points out, but I also question the colonial preconceptions that impose the narrative of resistance on indigenous bodies as their intrinsic quality or virtue.

Centering the maps and reading them from the postulates of indigenous feminism, the girls reverse the use of maps in the service of power and its normative grammar (Goeman, 2013: 23) to rather reclaim the space and dispute its inhabitations. Through body-mapping, therefore, the possibility of destabilizing the hermetic narratives that render indigenous subjects pure and free of contradictions is opened. In line with Goeman's (2013:

23) assertion that "absent in the discussion are the hopes of those who are claimed in the rhetoric of empire", the indigenous girls' traces contest the official narratives and claim that their emotions and sensations are political and constitutive of the space. In reading the girls' maps, inevitably Goeman's (2013: 16) reference to Dennis Cosgrove comes to mind:

> To map is in one way or another to take measure of a world, and more than merely take it, to figure the measure so taken in such a way that it might be communicated between people, places, or times. The measure of mapping is not restricted to the mathematical; it may equally be spiritual, political, or moral. By the same token, the mapping's record is not confined to the archival; *it includes the remembered, the imagined, the contemplated* (emphasis is mine).

It is through the intimate geographies of the emotional and the body, then, that the rationalities that impose dualisms such as those that attribute superiority to rationality to emotions, the internal and the external, and the objective and the subjective are rejected (Hayes-Conroy, 2010). The body-territory, far from this, bets on the relational co-production of situated and embodied emotions. These, in the words of geographer Farhana Sultana (2011: 164), are not limited to "individualized human subjectivities". The body-territory, in this sense, leaves no room for Western, Cartesian, and colonial dualisms. On the contrary, it is the experiential understanding of the whole that makes possible the eloquent clarity of indigenous women, such as Guatemalan Lolita Chávez or Honduran Berta Cáceres, when they affirm that many wars are being fought in their bodies.

THE COMMUNITY: SANTA ANA DE MUSERUNA, BENI, BOLIVIA.

The project I focus on is the construction of a highway that goes from the town of San Borja to San Ignacio de Moxos in Beni, Bolivia. This project is part of the famous

north-east corridor, and extends the highway by 139.6 kilometers. The North Corridor, however, is an infrastructure complex that received the name of "corridor" because of its conception as essential for the commercial flow envisioned by free market policies. The opening of the Northern Corridor and its ramifications both to the east and to the west, then, have been an important axis for the connection of Bolivia's Amazon and Andes, for the "export of natural resources, and for the transit of merchandise from and to neighboring countries" (Molina, 2010: 36), especially Brazil. As Bolivian researcher Silvia Molina (2010) affirms, this long-awaited corridor constitutes one of the main Amazonian routes for the transport of the ever-growing agro-industrial production which needs safe routes for their merchandise to "reach the Pacific Ocean to trade with Asia" (Molina, 2010: 37). The highway I focus one is currently being built by the China CCCC Second Highway Engineering Co., Ltd. company in the Territorio Indígena Multiétnico I (Multiethnic Indigenous Territory I, TIM-I for its initials in Spanish).

Figure 3: Materials and machine storage area. Photo: Nohely Guzmán N.

This region, according to official data, has an area of 497,697 hectares and is home for around 3,265 indigenous people (Fundación Tierra, 2010). Moreover, as the name of the area indicates, it is highly populated by indigenous communities that include a variety of ethnic groups such as Moxeño, Moxeño-trinitario, Yurakares, Tsimanes, and Movimas (Diez, 2011). The area in which TIM-I and the community with which I worked are located is categorized as a Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino (Indigenous, Originary, and Peasant Territory, TIOC for its initials in Spanish) by the Bolivian Constitution. This territory is legally defined as ancestral common lands where communities of origin were constituted (Constitución Política del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia 2009). This is an essential aspect for my case of study insofar as it gives legal recognition and autonomy of decision, use, and management of the resources to its peoples—although this, as my thesis will show, hardly means anything in implementation vis-a-vis the Chinese capitalist expansion.

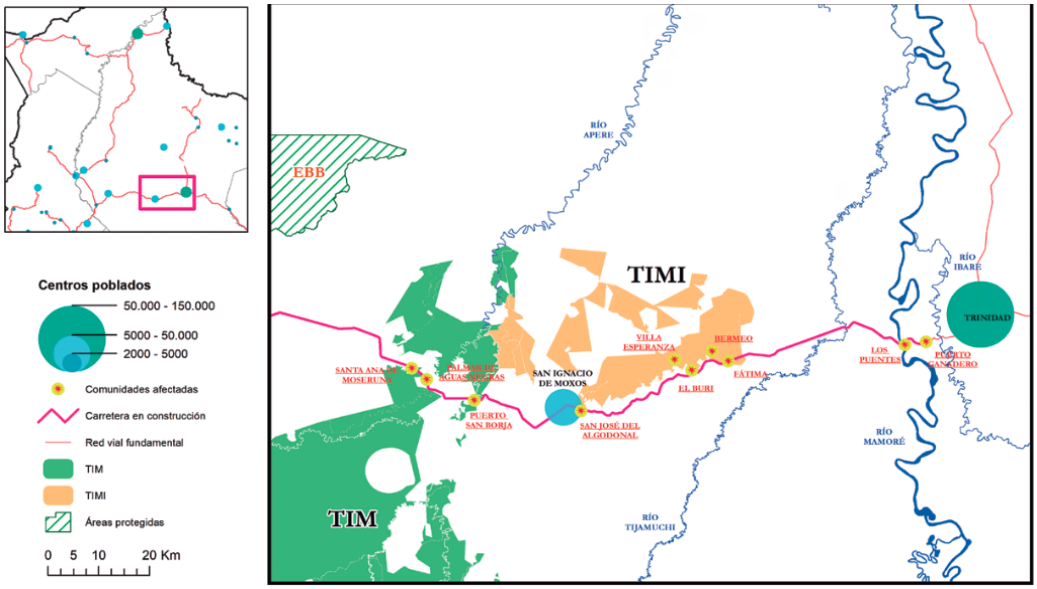

Figure 4: Regional communities map in Guzmán, N. (2018) "Capitalismo chino en la selva" Author: Huascar Morales Quintela (2018).

The TIM-I is composed of thirty-six indigenous communities. Santa Ana de Museruna (hereinafter Santa Ana), one of the biggest ones in the territory, is my main site of study. The community relies on subsistence agriculture as its primary economic activity. As such, it sees an opportunity in the construction of the highway that surrounds it. Its location in the center of the section of the highway in construction allows it to play a pivotal role for an important section of the Amazonian infrastructure projects. For this reason, I have chosen to focus solely in the community of Santa Ana, because of its proximity to the project under construction and the workers camp. Centering in this community in which I have conducted research two years ago, I make it operate as an analytical unit of the Chinese presence in the Amazon. It is a central location of the CCCC workers' camp, machine storage, and extraction and accumulation of arid and water resources, among

others, as is seen in Figure 3. My ethnographic observation and interviews in Santa Ana de Moseruna have allowed me to observe personally the roles and processes among the different actors involved in the construction of one of the largest and most awaited highways in the Bolivian Amazon. It is important, however, to bear in mind that the processes here described do not occur exclusively in this community and/or with this company. On the contrary, my argument is that the perceptions of the indigenous women and girls with whom I work do not respond only to individual concerns, but rather to experiences that are recreated, signified, and woven collectively. The body-maps presented in the following chapters will examine these as geographies of the body, the landscapes, the emotions, and its senses of what remains unnamed of the company's intervention.

Chapter Three
Embodying: Feminist Participatory-Action Research and the outlining of a new academic grammar

> "What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence."
>
> —Audre Lorde, *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action.* (1984: 41).

ATTENDING TO THE SENSIBLE

Arriving in the Amazon, transiting in the sound of insects, the river, the machinery, and then the sudden torrential rain with the laughter of children running around covering their heads with huge leaves of the trees felt like a provocation or an invitation to a world about which I knew very little. Long before the day of the collective mapping workshop I will examine below, I had spent time observing, walking, listening, and feeling the territory about which I had heard a lot and very little at once. Wildlife trafficking, pollution, complaints of violations of labor rights, and silent cases of sexual violence against indigenous women had led me there. But what was really happening? In the many conversations with the indigenous women whom I can call friends today, I discovered that there were things that could not be named. *"Se le nota en los ojos"* ("It shows in her eyes") (Guzmán, 2018; 160) was the type of comment I frequently heard when talking about the negative experiences that women had with the recently settled Chinese company. It seemed there was no way to weave a verbal bridge there. Most of the time I could not find the words to ask, and the rest simply could not be answered. The task seemed to be to feel.

"What does your gut tell you?" I asked, and listening to myself at first I thought: can such dismemberment exercise allow one to listen to what cannot be said with words? How does the body speak? Is there any grammar for bodily affects, sensations, and emotions? *"Nos duele"* ("It hurts us"), Carmela had said, concerned about the unexpected impacts they were experiencing with the Chinese company in their community. With her 9-year-old daughter sitting next to her in silence, Carmela warned me that there was much to do, and above all, much to heal. I vividly remember that episode on my first visit to the Amazon in which, while a family's father and a Chinese worker fought because of the exhaustion from the abuses committed by the company, the children looked through the woods nearby with tears in their eyes (Guzmán, 2018: 61). Among those intimate silences that seemed eternal, I asked myself again, *how can the bodies of those who are not heard express themselves?* "Listen to the gut" I thought, and some time later I returned to the community to collectively draw a map of the body and territory with the women and girls of that community.

The study I present here was deeply marked by the questions and scenes described above. Many of these were delicate moments, and not only in an intellectual sense, but also an emotional one that was put into play both in interviews and in informal conversations in the field. In the course of these, however, I noted the overwhelming silence of the non-visible witnesses: indigenous girls. Realizing that children's experiences and sensitivities remained unexplored, I understood that the objectives and methods I had identified to comprehend the intimate effects of Chinese geopolitics in the Amazon required substantial change. The process I wanted to analyze could not be fully understood without those who

navigate the spaces in different moments, paces, scales, and, with different codes. The girls, I realized, were "de-centered subjects" that inhabited the heart of all the discussions, but in invisibility (Elmhirst, 2011). Unlike adult women, the girls were able to name in other terms what they observed around them. By stripping off the formal and increasingly technical language that resulted from the encounter with the company, their experiences told a different story, with different meanings, and through different means. As such, and faced with the insufficient and inappropriate nature of conducting interviews, I imagined a proposal in which the *senti-pensar* (knowing-feeling) (Fals Borda, 2015) of the territory could be heard, walked, and spatialized sensationally. As a consequence, the implications of the process itself became part of the objects of analysis. What is the girls' experience of place in their community? What were they seeing, feeling, and thinking? These experiences and questions evoked Anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes' (2005: 43) words to guide me in a little-explored terrain:

> Before Margaret Mead, anthropologists treated children roughly the same way that Evans-Pritchard treated cattle in Nuer society—as omnipresent, part of the backdrop of everyday life, but otherwise mute and useless creatures, unable to teach us anything significant about "real," that is, adult, society and culture. Mead challenged this Victorian paradigm of children as seen but rarely heard from. She herself seemed to read the world largely through the eyes and sensibilities of children and adolescents.

With Mead, Scheper-Hughes, and Spivak's imprint, initially, I set out to propose another way to think and do fieldwork. This fieldwork *other* had as a precondition to learn (or rather unlearn) to listen without speaking, to take care of the gaze with which I register, and to feel with respect. I was especially taken with Scheper-Hughes' (1992: 28) research

praxis that points out that "seeing, listening, touching, recording, can be, if done with care and sensitivity, acts of fraternity and sisterhood, acts of solidarity. Above all, they are the work of recognition. Not to look, not to touch, not to record, can be the hostile act, the act of indifference and of turning away". With the indigenous girls, these lessons of feminist and anti-colonial ethics of political engagement had different scales, languages, and values. Embracing this formulation of ethical relation brings back Spivak's argument about those who "cannot speak". I subscribe, however, to McEwan's (2003: 348) approach in which Spivak's subalterns "cannot be heard", rather than not speak. By listening beyond words through maps that make up collective testimonies of the life in their community, is that my research aims to contribute to the epistemological bodies of feminist theory and critical geography. Although these approaches have paid attention to feminist geography, they have failed to engage with decolonial or anticolonial research methods in action and practice. The still predominant Western heritage in geography has left children, and specifically girls' feminist geographies undertheorized. Challenging "Science's eschewal of embodiment as a necessary condition for knowing; and, the equation of a disembodied 'view from nowhere' with objectivity" (Elwood and Leszcynski, 2018: 3), I propose a call for attention to Donna Haraway's (1988) "situated knowledges." Aligned with Haraway (1988), my experience has led me to bet on the particular, specific, and embodied objectivity that takes place in and through a "partial perspective". As she asserts in her questioning of Science, objectivity is "not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object" (Haraway, 1988: 583). Through the partial perspective analysis, "we might become answerable for what we learn how to see" (Haraway, 1988: 583).

In this chapter, I situate the methodologies constructed and used with the indigenous women and girls of the community of Santa Ana de Museruna throughout the research process. From this experience that took place in 2019 emerges a reflection on the potentiality of ethical (Hale, 2001) and socially committed research across time, the scope and limitations of the colonizing tensions that feminism still carries, and the dream of a different academic practice. I focus my work on the relationships cultivated in more than two years with indigenous women, and the commitments made before, during, and after fieldwork that have nurtured the development of this methodological framework and my academic praxis as a whole. In these years, I have simultaneously held positions of friendship and complicity. These, however, have not dissolved the power differentials between us. These ever-changing positions have taught me that "methods are powerful extensions of epistemological and ontological positions" (Hodge, 1995: 426). I have understood that methodological approaches are the window through which we see, hear, and sense the processes in front of us. Re-writing the research grammar, therefore, requires transforming dynamics with those whose lives are at play, and this process is in itself a core of broader objectives. Thus, I argue that through the collective mapping methodology that is based on the theorization of the body-territory of other indigenous women, the women and girls' questionings and contestations to the dominant discourses that represent and name them from a monolithic, dehistoricized, and homogenizing gaze are made possible.

DESTABILIZING FEMINISM: HORIZONS, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND THE SITE OF ENUNCIATION

In writing this chapter, I find it inevitable to destabilize feminism first as a universal horizon, and second as the "women's" political project. Although it is increasingly evident that feminism is broadening its horizons to “include” those who have not been at the core of its project, the double and triple othered women are far from being the feminist subject. Until today, if black, indigenous, Latin American, Arab, with-disabilities, or LGBTIQ+ women appear in feminist postulates, they almost always do so in a position of annex. The western feminist genealogy is so marked that even today, after years of internal disputes, those who write, dictate the agenda, and occupy the front line of the “feminist revolution” are the beneficiaries of the rest of the systems of oppression. Two cases of diametrically opposite appearance portray this clearly. On the one hand is the well-known case of racism in which Amy Cooper used the argument of harassment to unjustifiably report a black man in New York. On the other are the feminists who monopolize the narratives of the “revolution”, as was seen in the frame of the political conflicts that ousted the then president of Bolivia Evo Morales in 2019. In these conflicts, even the “leftist” political narratives were imposed by white feminist groups both from Latin America and the global north, leaving empty the much-preached principles of sisterhood and situated knowledge. In both cases, the bodies that took over power and spoke in public spaces were predominantly white both physically and symbolically. Our university classrooms, unfortunately, are not very different.

Although there are plenty of testimonies of the dynamics that highlight the racist, classist, and colonial remnants within feminism, the approaches that bridge the gap from theory to practice are very few. For this reason, and to grasp the complexity of the territories and bodies for and with whom I have chosen to work, I find it necessary to braid my research experience into a feminist anticolonial genealogy. This framework that nurtures of the heat of feminist struggles in the global south from which I come, allows me to return to the theoretical approaches of indigenous thinkers to understand and name the realities in the appropriate terms. Revisiting of indigenous genealogy and situating it in dialogue with the women and girls of the Amazon also allows me to problematize my position as an accomplice and outsider at the same time. Thus, when talking, drawing, dancing, walking, cooking, and writing, as I develop throughout this research, indigenous women are writing feminist proposals that open paths to transit academic spaces as well. I write from here with the intention of articulating a sense of one of the phrases an indigenous woman told me once: *"Nos sentimos solas, incluso con todo el trabajo y esfuerzo que hacemos, estamos solas"* ("we feel alone, even with the work and effort we make, we are alone"). Her words, disrupting the romanticized and mystified feminist "sisterhood", points out their placelessness in mainstream feminism, and the insufficiency of it to make sense of the complex "feminine" indigeneity. Of this experience that also operates as a mirror for me I make sense through Anna Tsing's (2011) metaphor of fieldwork as a wheel:

> A wheel turns because of its encounter with the surface of the road; spinning in the air it goes nowhere. Rubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick. In both cases, it is friction that produces movement, action, effect.

In the frictions, contradictions, and different expressions of tension in relation to power that are put into play in the field is the oxygen that makes the process of knowledge co-production fertile.

To be attentive to these frictions, and with the certainty that it is impossible for my presence not to interfere in how the processes experienced by women and girls are understood, expressed, and dealt with, it is necessary to look through the "intersectional spiderweb" (Lassén, 2016) between us. Far from aiming to dilute the undeniable differences, the research process entails challenging simplistic approaches of "adding women and stirring". It requires the deconstruction of language, time, politics, and ethics that enable interaction across cultural, racial, ethnic, and class divisions. There is no doubt that the research process is a "contentious terrain" of constant (re)negotiation, mutual learning, and exchange between the researcher and the researched (Mora, 2017: 51). This is why the ways, terms, times, and spaces in which the dialogues are proposed are so important. I find it fundamental to understand these processes as invitations to self-criticism, introspection, and the acceptance of mistakes, for growth. In this sense, I follow Caretta and Riaño (2016: 4) in their approach of "reflexively acknowledging how our interaction with all research participants influences the research process and outcomes, even if it means acknowledging failure."

The connections between the knowledge generation process, the methodology, and the embodied power differentials are also evident when choosing what to ask, when, where, why, and how to interpret the answers. It is in this exercise that the structural dynamics of

power are reproduced and materialized. These transcend the plane of performativity that threatens today the concept of intersectionality proposed by Crenshaw and other black feminist thinkers in the late 1980s. In this sense, though the co-production of knowledge with such marked gaps in race, class, ethnicity, and caste is not a simple task, it is important not to reduce it to a performance. A structure as hierarchical as the academy hosts mostly privileged subjects. As such, it is increasingly important to center criticisms of academic institutions as "whitening", "disciplining", and "de-radicalizing" devices of intersectionality, primarily made by black feminists (Jibrin and Salem, 2015: 10). It is, then, not enough to address the "diversity" of the groups with whom we work. It is necessary, as Mohanty (2013) and Faria and Mollett (2013) affirm, to question the post-modernization of the academy that "dilutes", "depoliticizes", and domesticates a process that has historically pointed to dismantle structural oppressions. To try to bridge these gaps, I propose to materialize the decolonization of methods through close dialogues, openness to disagreement, and an engagement that is not restricted to the period of time of fieldwork. Together with the theoretical, political, and affective anchorage in the theorization of indigenous feminists, this allows us to navigate the realities of the exiles of feminism: indigenous women.

By centering the theoretical body that sustains my method on indigenous and communitarian feminism, I dialogue with a theory built by indigenous women that challenges feminism "in its own semantic field" to "dispute its content" (Paredes and Guzmán, 2014: 17). I walk the study of indigenous feminism holding Adriana Guzmán's and Lorena Cabnal's hands. Their proposals, furthermore, align with the theoretical body

of Katherine McKittrick and Dianne Rocheleau, principally. From them, I pick lessons for the understanding of racialization as a key element in the analysis of the power inscriptions that I want to explore. These authors have proposed the body not only as a scale, but also as a space—one of memory, rebelliousness, care, and also disputes of power. Questioning the meaning of notions such as "freedom" that contemporary feminists have privileged under the banner of empowerment and the power in "paradoxical spaces," they are inverting hegemonic structures of knowledge production to start from the body and its experiences. The construction of my methodology, in this context, was nurtured by the interruptions they posed on the givens of knowledge production and research. With this in mind, and seeking to process the observed expressions that broke with Cartesian dualisms between body and mind, my fieldwork was based on the potential of disrupting the primacy of words. It was essential to make a pause to centralize and at the same time complicate the importance of hearing beyond verbality. A central point of my methodology, thus, was the understanding of what was behind the word(lesness) of the girl's experiences. As I explain below in this chapter, opting for drawn maps and graphics facilitated the articulation of an embodied epistemology that, in a way, bridges the gap signaled by Harding (1986: 21) about feminist epistemologies of "knowing and being".

To answer the questions I posed earlier, and following the lens and praxis proposed by indigenous and communitarian feminism, I embarked on the challenge of rethinking, re-imagining, and re-spatializing the "intellectualized" feminism that is failing to address the realities of non-hegemonic bodies. As Adriana Guzmán (2014) points out, this requires moving the individual to situate the community as a subject. In doing so, it is possible to

comprehend that the dynamics and affectations of the community or its members can be an affront to it in its entirety (Guzmán, 2014; Cabnal, 2018; Chávez, 2019). From the fertility of this framework emerged the proposal through which Santa Ana's indigenous women and I articulated a collective body-territory mapping workshop. The workshop, having its bases on popular education formats engendered in Latin America, facilitated the exploration of the processes in which "different bodies have and elicit different affective and emotional responses–enabling more politically relevant affective geographies" (Williams and Boyce, 2013: 898). Thinking and doing geography through the indigenous feminist theory, thus, makes possible to interpret both the women's testimonies and the girls' drawings as a cohesive body that transcends the logic of one or/over the other when it comes to their territories. Their fight for the respect of their bodies, the bodies of the men in their community, and for nature, as will be seen in the next chapter, expresses these intersections eloquently. Moreover, tailoring the body mapping activity to the women's needs allowed the opening of a space that had them and the girls at its core. Unlike interviews, this methodology decentered me from the interlocution to prioritize the group dialogues around their intimate experiences. Although it is impossible to pretend that the protocol, questions, and previous interactions did not influence the process, the discussions, hesitations, and even disagreements were drawn in the maps. In this process, the primacy of the voices of indigenous girls was raised as a site of enunciation that destabilizes the binary schemes of docility, freedom, victimhood, and agency.

Finally, to put everything in its place, it is necessary to address where I speak from, where I situate myself in feminism, and to problematize my position and role in this

process. Although this is not the most comfortable exercise, I believe that in writing this proposal from the closeness that I maintain with the communities, it becomes increasingly important to "settle" with the discomfort of the power differentials that, although not necessarily visible, are always present in the field. Along the same lines, I hope that my role as the interlocutor of this experience with the community is not confused as me speaking for them. Furthermore, I would like to address the enormous risk, as McEwan (2003: 351) contends, of "institutionalization", or "cooptation" as I prefer to call it, of the narratives of "decolonization". If not enough attention is given to this particular issue, the emptying of meaning that has submitted, and to some extent neutralized intersectionality as a concept and praxis will be imminent. This is particularly important given that today the narratives of postcolonialism serve "the interests of a western-based intellectual elite who speak the language of the contemporary western academy while perpetuating the exclusion of the formerly colonized and continually oppressed" (McEwan, 2003: 351). Addressing this risk implies at least recognizing the possibility that "decoloniality" could become a "new colonizing discourse" controlled and dominated by the western chains of consumption and distribution of ideas (McEwan, 2003: 351). As the indigenous authors themselves have identified, it is necessary to insist on the fact that these epistemological processes can be extractive, and when favored and endorsed by the academy, become exploitative dynamics. "Ethicizing" research (Hale, 2001), thus, is a responsibility that needs to be enacted to transcend written performances or IRB protocols. Lastly, with all these in mind, I find important to emphasize my engagement with this feminist proposal also as a political gesture of compromise. My commitment, as I have indicated before, is

not only with those bodies, emotions, and experiences, but also with the territories and agents with whom I dialogue. The silencing of indigenous theoretical bodies, then, cannot be separated from the silencing of their physical bodies, territories, and geographies. These processes are indivisible and irreconcilable. My horizon, then, is to re-weave their visibility and to maintain feminism as a verb.

FRICTION AS A SPACE

The distance between San Ignacio de Moxos, where I was staying, and Santa Ana de Museruna required a couple hours on the road before the collective mapping workshop. The parts of the road that the company had made progress on were hardly visible. It had rained the night before, and the soil in the area turned into a dark orange clay. Between puddles of water and the mud we were driving on, time passed slowly, until I finally saw the community. Upon arrival, I saw the women sitting in front of their doors watching television, doing laundry, or simply chatting with other women. As soon as the *corregidor* (community's indigenous authority) saw me entering the community, he announced to the nearby women that they could go to the town hall to start the planned activities. After greeting Carmen, the community's leader in charge of the women's organization, I walked from house to house, telling the women that the workshop would start soon. The women and girls began to arrive, Carmen asked for my help with a jug of *chicha* that she had prepared for the workshop, and walked with me to the community's *cabildo*. The *cabildo*, which is an important meeting room in the community, had changed very little since the last time I was there. It was a large wooden room with long benches located along the walls

of the room. On the outside, the *cabildo* was dressed in white paint with the logo and name of the community painted in green and blue, respectively. Right in front of it was the soccer field, and close to the left was the church.

"Buenas tardes a todos" ("Good afternoon everyone"), said the corregidor, and briefly recalling that this was a meeting that we had coordinated among the women, he asked me to introduce myself. *"Cuéntenos cuál es su nombre señorita, y a qué se debe su visita esta vez"* ("Tell us what your name is, miss, and the reason for your visit this time"), he asked me smiling as I adjusted the materials that I had brought to the workshop. I clearly remember looking around me and noticing that there was not a single free seat at the cabildo. The girls watched, laughed, and shifted nervously in their seats, and the boys watched from outside hanging from the windows. With them were also the husbands of the women with whom I was about to work, all together, gathered in a circle. I looked ahead and greeted the corregidor, the women, and the girls with whom I had coordinated by phone for about three months. Although they and I had already had contact for some years due to previous research that I carried out years ago (Guzmán, 2018), that introduction felt like the first time. When I said my name, age, which institution I belonged to, and the objective of the workshop, the face of the corregidor changed, and the husband of one of the women entered the cabildo abruptly. The men, especially two of them, felt uncomfortable when they heard the word "feminism", and with the idea of having a space for women only. Even though the coordination with them had taken months, they asked me many questions: *"What are they going to talk about?"*, "*What specific topics are they going to touch on?"*, "*What are they going to do?"*, *"Until what time are they going to stay here?"* and so on.

Seeing that I was answering their questions nervously, Carmela mentioned the process by which we had obtained their "permission" to do the workshop. Hearing this, the man walked to the door of the cabildo grumbling: *"bueno disculpe, es que tenemos que tener cuidado, porque luego vienen aquí a meterles ideas en la cabeza a nuestras mujeres"* ("well, excuse us, we have to be careful because then people come here to put ideas into our women's heads.") Both he and the corregidor left promising to wait outside. After a few minutes we started the workshop.

With the women and girls sitting around, we decided to review the conversations that months before that day defined the workshop's contours, its objectives, and what questions would be tried to answer. Although this process was also accompanied by an invitation to make the necessary modifications, they decided to continue with what was agreed and to map collectively. In the months leading up to the workshop, the women had emphasized the importance of taking care of each other's privacy in the topics that would now be discussed as a group. Noting the importance of not pointing out, exposing, or asking specific details that could make someone feel uncomfortable was one of the most important criteria. After some deliberation, we decided to conduct the discussion under the umbrella of "women's rights". From this derived the importance of evaluating the connection of the existing "legal" protection resources with the authorities and indigenous justice in particular. They mentioned that in the community there was always a feeling of unsafety. Joking that that is why it was necessary for the government to give them *"casas de material (cemento)"* ("houses made of cement"), they indicated that the permanent presence of workers and passing cars causes fear and feelings of helplessness. When discussing the

subject, I asked if there were any new events with the company that they wanted to work on, and after some internal discussions it was concluded that they did not want to talk about the company directly. Some indicated that their husbands and sons managed to find a spot to work there, and that they did not want to have problems with the company or face possible dismissal. Others argued that it was urgent to talk about the issue for "the girls" who increasingly "relate to them" (the workers), and "make serious mistakes." Because both positions highlighted the fear of retaliation by the company, we decided to set up the workshop in a way that did not censor any of these angles. As will be seen later in this chapter, the questions posed followed the women's breadth to speak about the changes they were experiencing in the community both socially and ecologically, and the possibilities that presented hope, and their rights. The agreement was that none of the questions should direct the answers one way or the other.

In the prior coordination process, I asked if they would agree to give an active role to the girls, since they were always around us in our activities. The women received the idea with enthusiasm, and pointed out that it would be an activity that could help everyone speak, that girls are usually the ones who most need to talk about "these issues", and also to review the values and principles they had as a community. At this point we decided that the questions should be simple and flexible so that they could fit all. We agreed that we would do mixed groups of women and girls of all ages, and that it would be important to try to give equal importance to both what girls and adult women point out. It was important for all of us to remember that, unlike the activities we had done in the past in a more traditional research format, this would be a flexible and freestyle workshop. The process

was carried out more as dialogues among the girls and their mothers than as the conventional format of questions and answers that center the researcher and their agenda rather than the community's dynamics. At the center we had put listening to themselves and giving rise to the expression of what we do not necessarily understand, what is contradictory, what can be perplexing, but also about what excites or awakens hope in their experience with the Chinese settlement. To do this, I proposed to draw. It was not, however, just any drawing, but rather a map of themselves and their territory. Although the idea was widely accepted, the women were initially skeptical about how this would work with the issues they had raised. For this reason, we agreed that I would organize a draft for us to discuss on which they could later change, remove, or restructure the workshop. I thought of the drawn maps as a call for radical and intimate creativity that cultivates knowledge about indigenous girls, for indigenous girls and women, through an embodied and de-theorized practice. On the phone calls in which we reviewed the prompt, some of the questions, and the materials, they approved them with satisfaction. The women pointed out that it would be a fun time for all of them, and that if there were details to further discuss, they could also do so at the workshop, on another visit, or at one of their meetings as a TIM women's group. This was the collaborative process that led to the collective mapping that I explore in this text.

On the day of the workshop, 32 women arrived with their daughters and sons. After a brief introduction of each one by name, age, and their expectations of the meeting, we moved the wooden tables that were at the back of the town hall, distributed the poster paper, the colored markers, the heart-shaped post-its, and painting supplies, among others.

Spontaneously, the groups were divided mainly between girls and women, although there were also mixed groups. The girls expressed that they preferred to do the activity with their friends, and since the mothers realized when the time came that they would also prefer to do the map with their friends (other adult women and mothers), the plans were readjusted. Of the groups of five that were formed, three consisted only of girls. The rest of the groups were mixed, although predominantly with adult women. This made the process even more interesting. Now it was about encounters between specific bodies in specific places, and with a lower risk that the presence of the mothers could, consciously or unconsciously, inhibit the girls' perspective. *"¿Se sienten listas para comenzar?"* ("Do you feel ready to start?") I asked, and with a loud *"si!"* coming from the girls, we started with the questions.

Figure 5: Body-territory collective mapping. Santa Ana de Museruna, Beni, Bolivia.

Observing your own body and that of the other women and girls in each group was the first step they had to take. In the prompt I had mentioned the importance of knowing each other, feeling each other, and paying attention both to individual peculiarities and to the things each one has in common with the rest of the group. This was followed with a discussion of how they were going to represent their body, and in drawing their silhouettes as a group, the consensus was to try to show themselves "as they really are." Both the girls and the mothers spread the poster paper on the table, and leaning on it, they drew the outline of their bodies. Laughing, the moms could be heard saying they like the emphasis on their hips, and the girls trying to figure out how to draw their hairstyles. What followed next was an experience of collective and accompanied introspection among the women and girls in the community—an act of self-reflection (Butler, 2018).

As the group reflections that I analyze in detail in the next chapter of my research progressed, the girls drew and discussed what increasingly took the form of complaints. Through the space of collective mapping, the girls shared thoughts, sensations, and feelings about their houses, the school, the common areas, the highway, and their gendered, aged, and racialized experiences of them in a way they did not share before, neither at school nor at home. It was evident to everyone that at some point the mood began to change, and the conversations became deeper, more intense, and perhaps also painful. During the collective mapping process, the need for being attentive of the process as such became evident to me, beyond what was said, drawn, or erased from the map. This brought to mind what Williams and Boyce (2013: 902) pointed out about prioritizing not only "what is said, but how it is said–the body language, facial expressions, and vocal intonations that accompany these

narratives [because they] provide insight into the affective experiences that shape them." In the very process of drawing collectively, testimonies, power relations, and silent reflections had come into play among both girls and adult women. When the question about healing came, for example, a series of pains, criticisms, and acts of denunciation emerged from the girls about what they perceived as the pain of nature and/in their bodies. Through this exercise and the reading-narration that accompanied it at the end of the workshop, the girls pointed out the places where they feel injustice, security, indifference, joy, exploitation, fear, and sadness in their bodies and territories. These geographical and affective intertwined locations were normalized and taken for granted for adult women. Details like these left mothers surprised and allowed us to open a dialogue to name and weave a common meaning in their experiences. The mapping process, as much as hanging all the maps on the wall, observing them, and dialoguing, allowed the girls to see that their experiences were not individual or isolated, but rather silently experienced collectively.

Narrating the maps, but also observing them, was a way of writing a collective testimony of what is rarely accomplished only through words. By naming the sensations, affections, emotions, and thoughts, the women and girls braided an intimate diary of their experience as indigenous women in a space intervened by, in this case, Chinese capital. By talking about their wounds and pains, the possibility of collective healing had been opened. Likewise, naming their dreams has unraveled and destabilized the coherent and disembodied narratives of capitalism, childhood, indigeneity, and space. Their mapped experiences evoke critiques to subjectivities too often depicted as monolithic in other research. As will be seen in the next chapter, the girls, unlike their mothers, were not afraid

of expressing anger, fear, sadness, excitement, confusion, disappointment, and hope throughout the process. Conversely, and in an alignment with what sociologist Javier Auyero's (2012) research points out, the girls offered the rare opportunity to see "ethnographic texts in which people hesitate, make mistakes, and/or are plagued by contradictions—subjects who are angry and happy, scared and courageous, subjects who know and don't know." These body-maps trace coordinates on the complex ways in which the indigenous girls make sense of the transformation of their territory after the investment of capital.

Finally, it is important to note that, as pointed out before, research triggers dialogues that do not exist in a vacuum. They are rather conditioned by dominant representations from both within and outside. Although the body-territory mapping offered a "theoretical move [to] give voice to longstanding silences" (Elwood and Leszcynski, 2018: 1), the women and girls expressed their disagreements and resisted their categorization as victims. In this sense, although their experiences of violence are clear on the maps, they interrupt and reject victimization. On the contrary, as has been shown in this research, they are the active agents who have a say in which questions they are willing to answer, the issues that are of interest to them, what is relevant to them, and what is not, depending on the moment and place where they are. For this reason, emphasizing the details of the process is relevant. Drawing maps and relying on other-than-verbal activities offered a channel of organic communication and of contestation to the hyper-technical language that was naming the community's territory, and the colonizing effects of it. This is something that neither the local authorities, nor the media, non-profits, schools, or

governmental institutions have managed to address. On the contrary, the dominant narratives around human rights, labor rights, and economic debt have created a static homogenization in the intervened territories. Recovering the pedagogy of Latin American popular education through workshops makes possible to transcend and navigate the ethical, affective, and political dynamics of the "data collection", "subject/object", and "research/researched". In the end, the girls' body-territory maps are a profound testimony to the ambivalent advance of Chinese capitalism in the Amazon: an opportunity, and a dispute for dignity.

"INTIMIDADES": THE ART GALLERY.

As we were finishing the workshop that guided the collective mapping, one of the girls approached me. She asked if I could get more people to see the map she had drawn. Highlighting the colors, beauty, and feelings that had been expressed about the community, their group, and their territory, the rest of the girls joined in asking if it was possible that "their works of art" were exhibited somewhere. Until then, that was not a possibility that I had contemplated. As part of the dialogue with the girls, their mothers, and the community in general, nevertheless, I looked for a way to exhibit the paintings in "the city", which is where they wanted the body-maps to be seen. Three months later, the girls' drawings were in an art gallery in downtown La Paz that brought together almost two hundred people, media, researchers, politicians, and artists.

LO INTERESANTE | A15
LUNES, 17 DE JUNIO DE 2019 | LA RAZÓN

Niñas de la Amazonía exponen 'Intimidades'

ORGANIZACIÓN FEMINISTA DE MUJERES JASY RENYHÉ

ARTE. *Niñas amazónicas de entre 3 y 18 años de edad dibujaron sus sentires.*

Expresión. La mayoría dibujó su tristeza por la violencia a la naturaleza

CLAUDIA CUARITÉ ■ LA PAZ

Intimidades **es el nombre de la exposición que empezó el miércoles 12 y que estará abierta hasta el miércoles 19 en la Galerie de la Alianza Francesa. Niñas de la Amazonia beniana muestran en dibujos sus sentires sobre carreteras y naturaleza.**

Todo empezó hace tres años, cuando la fundación Jasy Renyhê Ecofeministas hacía un seguimiento a la construcción de la carretera que va de Puerto Ganadero hasta San Borja, en la región amazónica del Beni.

En las visitas de campo "se pudo ver cómo las niñas eran demasiado silenciosas, pero tenían mucho que decir", cuenta Nohely Guzmán, representante de la organización.

14 dibujos fueron seleccionados para la muestra

Entonces, se pensó en entrevistarlas, pero como ellas se mostraban tímidas se les pidió que dibujaran sus problemas e incomodidades. De los 90 dibujos se escogió 14. "Trazos, colores y borrones narran denuncias, rumores, complicidades, ilusiones, miedos y perplejidades de sus heridas y anhelos", explica Ariane Stachurski, encargada de comunicación de la Alianza Francesa.

Las emociones más repetidas fueron la tristeza y la confusión sobre la construcción de la carretera que está a cargo de empresas chinas. Aunque ellas saben que será para su beneficio, ven con tristeza cómo este proyecto afecta a la naturaleza, relata Guzmán.

Estos sentimientos plasmados "han sido elaborados en el marco de las capacitaciones en derechos de las mujeres y prevención de violencia, realizadas en comunidades de la Amazonía de Beni", complementa Stachurski.

La entrada a esta exposición que rescata el sentir amazónico es gratuita. Los horarios de atención son: de 08.30 a 12.30 y de 14.00 a 21.30. Para más información se puede llamar al teléfono 2425004 (Alianza Francesa).

Santa Cruz | Oruro

Figure 6: La Razón Newspaper. "Niñas de la Amazonia exponen 'Intimidades'". Lo interesante Section. Page A15. June 17, 2019. La Paz, Bolivia.

Through the signing of an agreement between the non-profit organization with which I was working at that time, and the Alianza Francesa La Paz, Bolivia, we reserved an art gallery in which we exhibited fourteen drawings collected during field work in 2019. The installation was titled *"Intimidades"*, and kept the drawing assigned as cover of the

"Diario de Aventuras para Niñas Indígenas" (Diary of Adventures for Indigenous Girls) that I wrote and prepared that same year for the girls. In the art gallery, the teams from both institutions presented the drawings, the questions that guided the installation, and the photographs and videos of the collective mapping process in the territory. In the opening remarks, we detailed our bond with the girls, the aspects that they had highlighted in their narrations and descriptions of the maps, and conveyed the words that they could not give as they could not travel to the exhibit presentation. Subsequently, the girls' received the videos, clippings of the press releases in the newspaper, and photos and comments that people had made about their artwork. Both the girls and their families expressed their joy at seeing the impact that the exhibition had in La Paz, and with emotion expressed their excitement about future activities. As I write these lines, our contact has continued. Many of the families have communicated their desire to read this thesis, and that when the quarantine is over, I bring them copies and another "fun activity."

Figure 7: Art Gallery Exhibition Poster. "Intimidades: trazos de la contradicción, perplejidad, y añoranza de niñas indígenas de la amazonia intervenidas por empresas chinas". Illustration artist: Angie Vanessita (Ecuador). June 2019, La Paz, Bolivia.

Figure 8: Exhibition opening: Questionnaire on the wall. June 12, 2019. La Paz, Bolivia.

Figure 9: Installation at exhibition opening. Attendees observing the drawings. June 2019.

Figure 10: Installation at exhibition opening. Attendees observing the drawings. June 2019.

"CARTOGRAFÍA CUERPO-TERRITORIO: MAPEO COLECTIVO PARA MUJERES Y NIÑAS INDÍGENAS": THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Original version in Spanish.

CARTOGRAFÍA CUERPO-TERRITORIO: MUJERES Y NIÑAS INDÍGENAS

Antes de empezar las actividades, les pido que nos escuchemos con atención. Lo que vamos a hacer se llama "cartografía cuerpo-territorio". Es un dibujo que hacemos de nosotras mismas y que es al mismo tiempo un mapa. Con esta técnica se pueden hacer evidentes las agresiones y también alegrías que experimenta nuestro territorio y cómo lo vivimos en nuestro cuerpo. Al dibujar nuestros cuerpos-mapas, tenemos que escucharnos a nosotras mismas y las demás compañeras. Este ejercicio puede ayudarnos a hacer consciente que sentimos, que necesitamos como comunidad, que queremos defender, que queremos sanar, y que queremos celebrar o alcanzar en el lugar donde habitamos: nuestro cuerpo y nuestro territorio.

1. Dibujamos la silueta de nuestro cuerpo completo. Tratamos de no omitir detalles porque todo es importante. ¿Cómo es este cuerpo? Sentimos, nos miramos, discutimos, y lo dibujamos.
2. En el cuerpo que dibujamos vamos a dibujar algunos de los espacios que habitamos diariamente. Recuerden que se trata de un mapa. Escuchen a sus sentimientos, a sus recuerdos, y a sus tripas.
   - ¿Dónde siento mi casa?
   - ¿Qué lugar ocupa la comunidad en mi cuerpo?
   - ¿Hay lugares que remarco más que otros? ¿Por qué?
   - ¿Dónde siento la felicidad en mi cuerpo y en mi territorio? Pienso en las partes de mi cuerpo que me avisan que estoy feliz, y pienso en los lugares en los que he sido más feliz. Dibujo esas partes en mi mapa, y pongo un corazón en cada uno de esos lugares.

3. En mi mismo cuerpo, ahora, dibujo aquello del día a día de mi comunidad y mi vida que me incomoda, quiero evitar, o me gustaría cambiar.
   - ¿En qué parte de mi cuerpo siento esos malestares? ¿De dónde vienen esas sensaciones? ¿Hay lugares específicos que me causan esto? Pongo atención a mis emociones. Las dudas, el dolor, la tristeza, la vergüenza, las lágrimas, o simplemente los nervios son importantes, y merecen ser ubicados.

   - ¿Siento que hay violencia en la comunidad? ¿Dónde? ¿Qué partes del cuerpo sienten esto o me avisan de esto? Dibujo una curita en cada lugar donde yo identifico heridas y dolores.

   - ¿Qué me dice mi cuerpo mientras pienso, recuerdo, siento, y dibujo esto? Grafico también mi rabia y preocupaciones.

4. Miramos nuestro mapa entero ahora. Tiene corazones pero también curitas, ¿no? Pero, ¿hay cosas que cosas nos gustaría aumentar, quitar, o cambiar? Escucho mi cuerpo ahora mismo.
   - Pienso en mis sueños, esperanzas, ilusiones, e inspiración. ¿Dónde siento todo esto? ¿Qué me da fortaleza y seguridad? ¿Es una persona, es un lugar? Los dibujo en mi mapa.

5. Hemos llegado al final. Ahora juntamos los mapas de todas, nos sentamos juntas, y empezamos a mirar qué nos dice la unión de nuestros cuerpos. Luego cada grupo hace una lectura de su cartografía cuerpo-territorio y reflexionamos conjuntamente. Recordemos que este es un ejercicio muy íntimo y delicado en el que también debemos tratarnos con cuidado. Este es un momento en el que buscamos conocer *con* las otras, y no solo *sobre* las otras.
   - ¿Qué percibimos? ¿Qué ha resultado de la unión de nuestros cuerpos-mapas? ¿Hay cosas en común? ¿Qué los hace diferentes?

- Conjuntamente ubicamos y marcamos los sitios que hemos identificado como refugios para nosotras.

- ¿Hay algo que quiero señalar o decir?

6. Cierre del taller
   - Estas han sido horas muy íntimas. Les agradezco la confianza y el cuidado. Nos damos un abrazo fuerte entre todas, y a comer las empanadas y la chicha.

English translation of the questionnaire

BODY-TERRITORY CARTOGRAPHY: INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Before we start the activities, please listen to each other carefully. What we are going to do is called "body-territory mapping". It is a drawing that we make of ourselves that is at the same time a map. With this technique the aggressions and also joys that we experience in our bodies and our territory can be made evident. When drawing our bodies-maps, we have to listen to ourselves and to each other. This exercise can help us become aware of what we feel, what we need as a community, what we want to defend, what we want to heal, and what we want to celebrate or achieve in the place where we live in: our body and our territory.

1. We draw the silhouette of our full body. We try not to omit details because everything is important. What is this body like? We feel, we look at each other, we dialogue, and we draw it.
2. In the body that we draw, we will draw some of the spaces that we inhabit daily. Remember that it is a map. Listen to your feelings, your memories, and your guts.
   - Where do I feel my home?
   - What place does community occupy in my body?
   - Are there places that I highlight more than others? Why?
   - Where do I feel happiness in my body and in my territory? I think of the parts of my body that tell me that I am happy, and I think of the places where I have been the happiest. I draw those parts on my map, and I put a heart in each of those places.
3. In my own body, now, I draw what from the day to day in my community and my life bothers me, I want to avoid, or I would like to change.
   - In what part of my body do I feel these discomforts? Where do these feelings come from? Are there specific places that cause this to me? I pay attention to my emotions. Doubts, pain, sadness, shame, tears, or just nerves are important, and they deserve to be located.
   - Do I feel there is violence in the community? Where? What parts of the body feel this or warn me of this? I draw a band-aid in each place where I identify wounds and pain.
   - What does my body tell me as I think, remember, feel, and draw this? I also graph my anger and concerns.
4. We look at our entire map now. It has hearts but also band-aids, right? But are there things that we would like to add, erase, or change? I listen to my body.

- I think of my dreams, hopes, wishes, and inspiration. Where do I feel all these? What gives me strength and security? Is it a person, is it a place? I draw them on my map.

5. We have reached the end. Now we put everyone's maps together, we sit, and we begin to observe what the union of our bodies is trying to tell us. Then each group does a reading of their body-territory cartography and we reflect together. We remember that this is a very intimate and delicate exercise in which we must also treat ourselves with care. This is a moment in which we seek to know *with* the others, and not only *about* the others.
    - What do we perceive? What has resulted from the union of the different body-maps? Do the maps have anything in common? What makes them different?
    - Together, we locate and mark the sites that are like havens for us.
    - Is there something I want to point out or say?
6. Workshop closing
    - These have been very intimate hours. I appreciate the trust and care. We all hug each other, and eat the empanadas and chicha.

Chapter Four
The geographies of indigenous girlhood: Body-territory maps

> "I am constructing a map of the region, paying attention to faces, to the unknowable, to unintended acts of returning, to impressions of doorways. Any act of recollection is important, even looks of dismay and discomfort. Any wisp of a dream is evidence."
>
> —Dionne Brand, *A map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging.* (2001: 19)

"ESTA CARRETERA NOS ATRAVIESA": PUTTING EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE.

It was almost 11:45 am when I first arrived to the community of "Santa de Museruna" in the Territorio Indígena Multiétnico I (Multiethnic Indigenous Territory I, TIM I) in 2017. The heat was reaching a peak, and Roberto, the friend that drove the car all the way from La Paz to this community, wished me luck before I left the car. *"Suerte! Andá con cuidado!"* he told me, and showed me the car's thermometer indicating it was 37 degrees Celsius outside. As soon as I opened the door, I felt the Amazon's thick air again. After living in a neighboring region for almost three years, I thought it would not surprise me that much. "Every time feels like the first time here" I thought as I saw the house of the woman I would interview in the distance. Those three short blocks felt long to me under the sun, but I could see her waving at me sitting under the shade at the front of her house. "*Cómo está licen! Que bien que ha llegado!*" said Carmela as I got close, dragging my shoes full of mud. Carmela, a forty-three-year-old indigenous leader from the community of Santa Ana was the first indigenous woman I interviewed in my fieldwork in 2017. Hearing my proposal, she immediately told me that we would have a lot to talk about. I vividly remember how she got up from her red chair to bring up a small metal cup with two long cords in which a piece of wood was burning with a dense white smoke. *"Esto va*

ahuyentar a los mosquitos que te están comiendo" ("This will scare away the mosquitoes that are eating you") she told me laughing. Carmela opened the door of her house, experiences, fears, premonitions, and hopes to me in a way that marked the rest of my research and studies today. Her words became a compass that led me to the geographies of intimacy—those whose traces delineate and compose the maps drawn two years later that I visit here. In the first part of this chapter I revisit and outline the context and timeline of what later gives rise to the central elements of my research: the girls' collective mapping of the body-territory. After the first section, therefore, I focus on unraveling the girls' maps in their common and different elements. Towards the end of the chapter, I offer some final notes for the reading of the maps and the girls' experiences both with the presence of the Chinese company and the highway it is building in their territory.

Two years before the encounter I narrated in the lines above, Carmela's community had received news that a highway would be built on what were currently stretches of intermittent asphalt. As the rest of the people interviewed would later affirm, Carmela stated that no one in her community was consulted regarding this construction. In Santa Ana, as well as in the other 30 communities along the highway's route, the news came when the Administradora Boliviana de Carreteras (Bolivian Highway Administrator, ABC, for its initials in Spanish) sent a team to measure the area (Guzmán, 2018). These measurements, however, were not new. Another interviewee from the region explained to me that approximately every two years, or when local elections would approach, an ABC team would be sent to take the same measures over and over again. Why, then, would the

engineer-looking people's presence this time mean anything? As one of the local teachers interviewed said: *"Para que siquiera preguntar!"* ("Why would we even ask!").

Santa Ana, as well as the other communities along the highway's route I analyze, however, had a particularity: unlike most capitalist settlement processes, the idea of building the highway was well received by the community. In fact, they wanted and waited for it to be built for years (Ibid). The restricted and difficult access to the areas where communities are settled has always posed challenges for its peoples. The geographic characteristics of this Amazonian area known for its extensive savannas and wetlands, especially during the rainy season, usually hinders the transit of transport for weeks, and with it, people's access to basic services such as medicine, commerce, diversified food, and even school. It did not take long, however, for the community to face the difficulties that the construction of the road would bring with it. The fact that no consultations were made about the highway's construction implied, among other things, that no agreements had been made on the processes, size, stages, extraction of resources, benefits, etc. Through disinformation, Santa Ana and other communities in the region of analysis were put by both the state and the companies in a position where the indigenous authorities felt trapped between two binary options: either submissively accepting the companies' conditions, or not having the highway they wanted at all. Submission and subordination, interviewees and ethnographic notes reveal (Guzmán, 2018), would rapidly become organically constitutive to the "temporality of infrastructure" (Hetherington, 2014 cited in Tucker, 2016: 9) in which future-oriented promises and expectations became articulated as governing and regularizing strategies (Tucker, 2016). As theorists on domination have

studied, these aim to turn rights-bearing citizens into compliant, passive, and waiting subjects (Bourdieu, 2000; Auyero, 2008; Tucker, 2016). In contexts like the one I focus on, uncertainty, ambiguity, and *possibility* itself are essential in the realm of governance, and in power's production of precarity (Bourdieu, 2000; Auyero, 2008).

When I was carrying out interviews in Santa Ana in 2017, people did not know even the smallest details about the highway. How many lanes would it have? Who would build it? Where would it cross? What was the expected termination date? Andy Y., Santa Ana's *corregidor* in 2017, patiently recounted the times in which he and other indigenous leaders walked for hours from their communities to get to meet with the institutions in charge of the highway. Most of the times, he narrated, they were left waiting for the authorities to show up (Guzmán, 2018). By then, the asymmetrical power dynamics had already made negotiations, complaints, and agreements more complicated, accentuating pre-existing cleavages based on the necessities of the community. This would later be materialized in are rather "performances" of dialogue and negotiation between the Chinese company and the community. These, held in Chinese with white translators from the United States or Europe that could poorly communicate the community's needs, would portend profound ramifications on the daily life, landscape, and intimacy of, especially, women. By attempting to diminish the community to either beneficiaries or outsiders, these fora restricted the community's ability to exert the agency of their own interests, and until this day, serves as an acute statement about who has power. In the silence of bewilderment, waiting seemed to be the only surety. Over time, information would be filtered and

confirmed with the workers' more frequent appearances in the territory. As months went by, large scaffolds would rise up into the distance among the trees.

One day, Carmela narrates, Santa Ana's lands were occupied by the Chinese company CCCC Second Highway Engineering Co., Ltd. (CCCC). The company, whose signs would rapidly become ubiquitous, had been assigned by the government to the construction of a 139.6-kilometer-long highway that would cross Santa Ana de Museruna's lands. In this same area, CCCC installed the camp site that would later house hundreds of workers for the next two to three years (Guzmán, 2018). This place, which was shaping and had been shaped by strategic logics and interests, would rapidly start inscribing changes in the community's landscape. Among their official signs and those articulated around the company to signal services, its presence became materialized, and with it, a series of spatial practices that disputed the (re)configuration of the territory's "politics of place" (McKittrick, 2006; Mollett and Faria, 2013). These changes and their subsequent spatial politics, as my research demonstrates, had a role in constituting gendered, aged, racialized, and ethnicized subjectivities and spatialities on the indigenous populations. The arrival of CCCC, as all the interviewed women recount, felt simultaneously intrusive and scary, and hopeful and promising (Guzmán, 2018). The alterations in the landscape that began with excavations, bringing and storing large stones with tractors, and signs that read *"Peligro, hombres trabajando"* ("danger, men working") to redirect traffic, soon started to be experienced by the women in their bodies. In their words, this experience was lived as an "*atravesamiento*" ("crossing")—one that would divide their territory into two, and in parallel, do the same to their bodies (Guzmán, 2018). Throughout the interviews and

ethnographic observation in 2017, it became evident that the re-spatializing practices, discourses, and affects were gradually extended into the body, and through embodiment, reproduced, negotiated, and sometimes resisted. These traces of capitalist inscription, for Santa Ana's women, were already something intimate and capable of merging the global and the local in their bodies.

Figure 11: Construction materials. Santa Ana de Museruna, Beni, Bolivia (2019). Photo: Nohely Guzmán N.

In their narrations, indigenous women of different ages would frequently note something in common across the community: the transformations of their lives in the construction areas began at the very moment of the workers' arrival. In the nearby towns' urbanized areas as well as in the communities, the streets were suddenly filled with dozens of buses full of men. These foreign men, not expected and never introduced to the community, 12-year-old Katherine recounted, began to walk around the soccer field and the community's homes in search of everyday supplies such as phone cards, shampoo, coke, or water (Guzmán, 2018). Rapidly, however, the workers turned to mockery, whistling, catcalling, jokes, and an intimidating gaze that made the young women and girls feel a risk they had not experienced before (Guzmán, 2018). Thus, the presence of about

300 Chinese and Bolivian male workers in the Amazonian communities was flagged as threatening by women of all ages (Guzmán, 2018). In their narrations, the permanent masculine gaze under which they started to live introduced a sensation of danger to their daily lives because of the tension created by the workers' ceaseless gaze (Guzmán, 2018). In the shower, while doing laundry, when cooking, doing homework, and before and after going to sleep, they were there, interviewees back in 2017 pointed out (Guzmán, 2018: 60). In this context, women—but especially young adolescents like Katherine—were advised not to walk around the road, the workers' camp, or the area of machines' storage. These, which were safe spaces before the workers' arrival, had become threatening sites for them. As a consequence, women's particular "sense of the place" (Rocheleau, 1995), determined by their age, gender, and ethnicity became readjusted according to the times and places in which the encounters with the workers *could* take place. The avoided places, as will be seen more directly on the girls' maps, delineated an alternative lived geography of their territory in different scales, sensations, temporalities, and (im)mobilities.

One of the central elements of my research in 2017 pointed to the fear experienced by women upon the arrival of the company. Their fear, however, had several components, and cannot be reduced or explained solely by the numerical quantity of workers that would become an annexed settlement in the territory. On one hand, the lack of knowledge and uncertainty around the construction of the highway created fears of displacement, opening of veins for the extraction of resources, and the re-composition of the territory itself as a *"lugar de paso"* ("space of transit") (Guzmán, 2018). The idea of turning the territory into a "space of transit" came loaded with a sense of disposability—more trash along the road

and near their homes (plastic cups, water and coke bottles, were brought up as examples), loud car and truck noise, air pollution with dust and gases, accidents, crime, drunk men, among others were mentioned. Derived from these were the disproportionately gendered meanings of this process as fearsome. The lived experiences of Santa Ana's women and girls attested what indigenous, black, and feminist political ecology scholars have shown about women's relations with the space, place, and processes of dispossession (Rocheleau, 1995; Ramamurthy, 2004; McKittrick, 2006; Cabnal, 2010; Nightingale, 2011; Colectivo Miradas Críticas al Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017; Zaragocín and Caretta, 2020). As these authors have pointed out, the materiality in which "household resources, gender division of labor, and livelihood security" are circumscribed unfold "everyday practices and engender body politics" (Nightingale, 2011: 154) of which Santa Ana's women were not exempt. In the communities I observed back in 2017, it was the enactment of the capitalist, patriarchal, and colonial logics that established the geographies of fear, and set the pace of the scales, intensities, and paths of the inscription of power. Women's emotions, bodily sensations, and affects, undoubtedly, were a corporeal continuity of it.

Santa Ana's women's concerns, fears, speculations, and premonitions, however, do not exist in a vacuum. The experiential and materializing notions of these processes were interwoven with the collective emotions engendered by the existing cases of sexual violence, harassment, and even rapes and unwanted pregnancies of young adolescents with Bolivian and Chinese workers (Guzmán, 2018). These experiences, despite not having been the personal case of any of the women participating in my research, were shaping the fears, affects, and emotions of the community's women—oftentimes even being felt and

lived in anticipation through fear. These, furthermore, are inseparable from the permanent and brutal expressions of violence with which Chinese companies are now characterized for the exploitation and violation of labor and environmental rights[22]. The viral videos of Chinese workers brutal beatings and the images captured by local communities of Chinese workers handcuffed and treated as prisoners[23] have aroused fear and alarm in the communities, especially around women. These are scenes that are observed on a regular basis. Together with the language barriers that set the conditions that trigger violence against the communities, and the fragmentation of the community's social fabric that the workers' presence had opened up, these scenes have completely changed both the social, physical, and affective landscape of the territory. The maps I here analyze offer a guide along the corporeal spatialities of what McKittrick (2006: 46) would name "Dis Place". These maps, through a McKittrickean (2006: 46) gaze, merge the material geographies in "the scale of the body" to become "locations of politization". The indigenous body-maps, in this context, disclose the reinvented paths traced by the girls and their territorialities that have emerged in antagonism to their geographical erasure.

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[22] See Opinión (2017). Ministro confirma que una empresa china vulnera derechos de sus empleados. Retrieved from: http://www.opinion.com.bo/opinion/articulos/noticias.php?a=2017&md=0926&id=231490

More complaints and reports in La Patria (2017). Verifican que empresa china incumple norma laboral. Retrieved from: http://lapatriaenlinea.com/?nota=280337&utm_ source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter 22

[23] See Urgentebo (2017). ¿Reos chinos en Bolivia? Retrieved from: https://www.urgentebo.com/noticia/%C2%BFreos-chinos-en-bolivia.

This topic gained attention in local newspapers and media. More in Periódico digital Eju (2017). Empresas chinas que ejecutan obras en Bolivia trabajan con presos traídos del país asiático (video). Recuperado el 15 de junio de 2017. Disponible en: http://eju.tv/2017/06/empresas-chinas-que-ejecutan-obras-en-bolivia-trabajan-con-presos-traidos-del-pais-asiatico-video/

Cecilia's recounts, a 16-year-old adolescent, best capture the experiences of these fearsome encounters. Timidly describing the daily routines and strategies that she had to adopt to navigate daily life in her community, she shares an experiential re-territorialization of her community. Among other things, she highlighted the meticulous care she now takes about what route to take when walking alone or with her little siblings to school and around the community. Like her, other indigenous girls would discreetly nod when identifying the highway as a place where they feel at high risk. Another interviewee similarly drew a parallel between the progress of the road and the closeness and intensification of the fearsome experiences described. *"They come here, they play soccer in the late afternoon, and they now have been drinking alcohol at night after that. We have told them not to come because the girls are afraid something will be done to them, but they don't care"*, said an interviewed mother who, helpless to see that her concerns were not being addressed, felt betrayed by the community's authorities as well (Ibid). Only some days after a drunken worker crashed a truck into a community's family house, and Cecilia revealed that she started mentally rehearsing her path to go to school, what to do if she heard trucks and workers coming, and what to do when she was left alone at home. Running into the shrubs, always looking everywhere, and not leaving the house when it gets dark, she recounted, with hints of reserve, embarrassment, and vulnerability (Ibid). Her fearful experience of the community's re-territorialization, undeniably, was imbued in the collective articulation of fear, communitarian fragmentation, and the company's spatial deployment.

In listening to the experiences of the women, adolescents, and girls of Santa Ana, Katherine McKittrick's words returned to me with complementary meanings. Similar to

the geographies of black women of and from where McKittrick writes, the "sense of place" of indigenous girls who in my first field research could not speak were composed in the "paradoxical spaces" of "partially listening, seeing, and feeling her immediate surroundings without formally participating in them" (McKittrick, 2006: 41). In the silences of what could not be said, Thien's (2005) "spatialities of emotion" were called into question. Those aspects that escape the linguistics domain, and that arise "impinging on the body" (Williams and Boyce, 2013: 898), brought to the fore Rocheleau's (1995: 90) assertion that weaves consonances with the experiences of indigenous women: "the body is our most immediate and intimate geography". In this context, and orbiting McKittrick's (2006: 46) words, I understood that the body is "a historically produced terrain through which a different story is told". Following the theorization line proposed by Lorena Cabnal and Adriana Guzmán, I borrow McKittrick's (2006) words to think about the territorialization of the body, the embodiment of territory, and the ways in which they compose a writing of geographic expansion that extends over the women's bodies. Returning to her words that affirm that "the body is territorialized (…) publicly and financially claimed, owned, and controlled by an outsider (McKittrick, 2006: 44), I found myself asking the following questions: What perspective, sensitive to the emotional and independent of words, would allow the expression of the sensations and affects that were structuring the body and territory of Santa Ana's women and girls? What could embracing silence unfold for the understanding of the corporeal paradoxes, memories, sensations, and experiences of those who inhabit the intersections of age, race, and gender? Two years later in 2019 Santa Ana's women and girls and I coordinated another visit and activity. In this,

as I have detailed in Chapter Three, the center aimed to continuing the conversations that until that moment we had held virtually. Thus, in the analysis that follows, the main word comes from the indigenous girls. From their angle and scale, re-drawing and re-assigning meanings to words and traces, the girls offered insights for the understanding of capitalist intervention, their encounters with power, and drafted a notion of girlhood's spatiality. In what follows, I will walk the paths opened in the girls' body-territory maps drawn in 2019, and through them, explore the corporeal, emotional, and material geographies of their everyday intimacy with the construction of the highway by a Chinese company.

INDIGENOUS GIRLHOOD GEOGRAPHIES: THE MAPS.

A large portion of the academic work on emotions, sensations, and affects have very little references to the feelings, perceptions, or bodies of those who are experiencing them. Emotional encounters, however, are always mediated by see-able body-scales (McKittrick, 2006) that determine the bodily experiences of emotions, discourses, and practices. To these complex processes of the material and the subjective, Rocheleau (1995) has called the "sense of place" as more than an object or a site to be part of, to rather be a larger whole that is experienced. This, bringing to the fore a complex interconnection of scales across the body, the community, and the territory, allows the understanding of them as co-produced by development and in relation to power, without being reduced to it (Elmhirst, 2011: 131; Nightingale, 2006: 154). In this sense, the maps analyzed here are a form of testimony of the multiple, simultaneous, and contradictory ways in which the particularities of power are materialized in the indigenous girls' world. Furthermore, the

drawn representations express the interwovenness of the "multi-faceted and multi-sited force" of geopolitics from an intimate perspective (Pain and Staeheli, 2014: 344). On them, Rocheleau's et al (1996: 9) proposal of the "power of partial perspective" becomes a pedagogical example of the lived, felt, and sensed body in its raced, gendered, aged, and ethnicized scale and its allowed "degrees of mobility" (Massey, 1994: 186). Many of the elements in the maps here presented will be seen in the other cartographies analyzed. However, to understand the content of them, attention should be paid to both differences and similarities with equal importance. As I have signaled earlier, the locations, meanings, perceptions, and experiences pictured here are not understandable in individuality. Rather, the collective weaving of them is what offers coordinates not only for the community of Santa Ana, but also potentially for other geographies, other projects, and other landscapes. In the sections to come, I will explore the material representations that emerged in answering with sensations and emotions to the corporeal everyday life. Divided in three, these sections allow us to visualize how and where indigenous girls experience fear, hope, pain, inclusion and exclusion from the alternative geographic code of indigenous girlhood's scale.

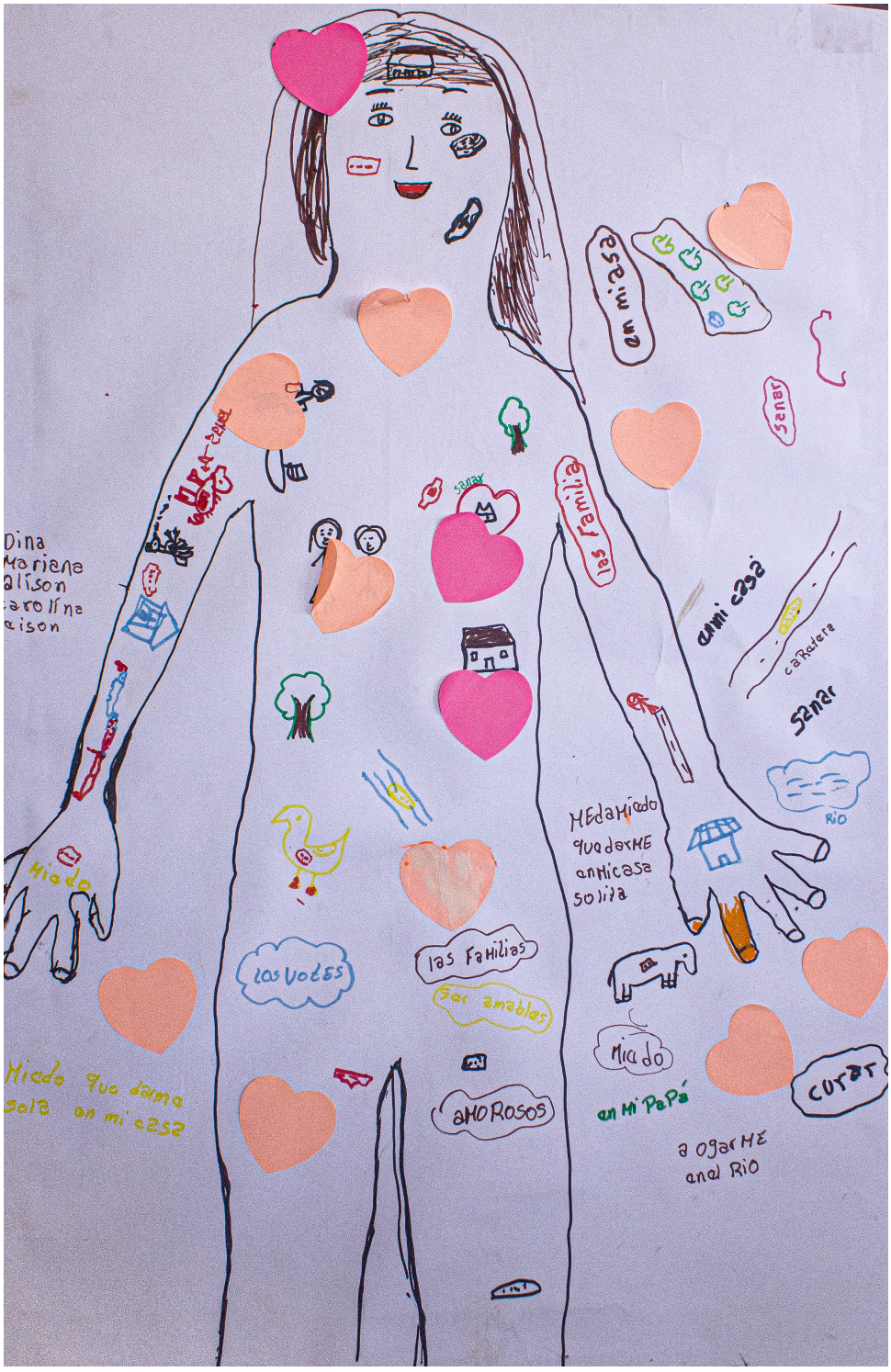

Figure 12: Map A.

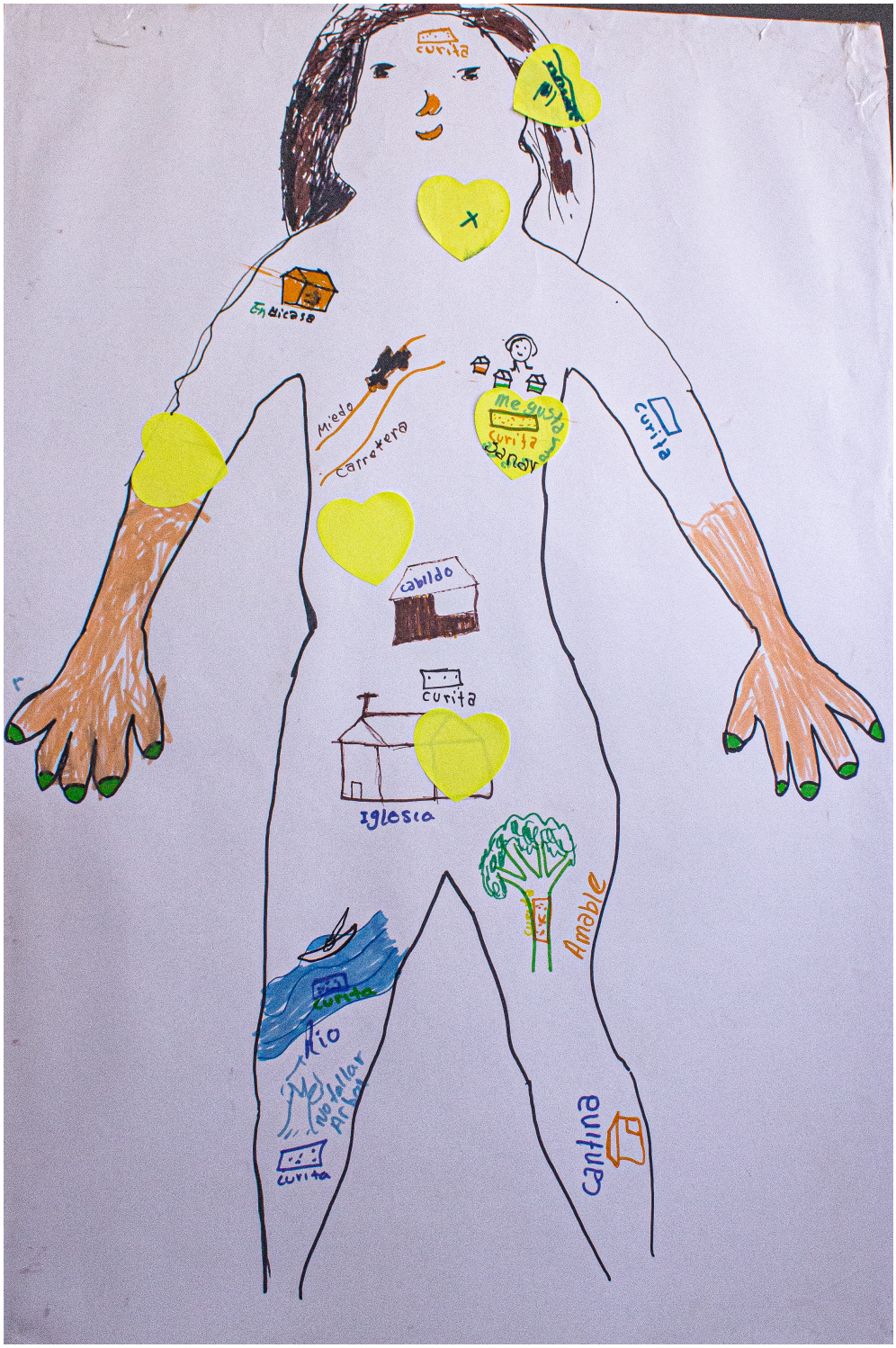

Figure 13: Map B.

Figure 14: Map C.

The traces of hope and dreams

When the body-mapping workshop began, the girls started by observing their surroundings, their own bodies, those of the other girls, and those of their mothers. The drawings' vivid colors, creativity, and the presence of hearts demonstrate their care and attention in this activity. As I have mentioned in Chapter 4, the girls were asked to place a heart in the specific sites in which they feel emotions and affects such as love, safety, joy, hope, and care in their bodies. Drawing on feminist geographic theory, this aimed to explore the "meaning and representation [that] infuse our visceral experiences of our bodies-in-space" (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2010, 1281). Intending to destabilize the tendency to monolithize indigenous women in positions of either victims or selfless fighters, this section calls into question the homogeneous, binarizing, and paralyzing accounts of the company's settlement in their territory. By exploring the girls' hopes, wishes, and dreams, we settle in ambiguity and thereby avert the totalizing predestined fatalism of capitalism and the unrestrainable destiny of its forces. Insisting on accounting the emotions of the bodies-in/as-space, three notions guide us through these paths: family and home; common spaces (school, church, cabildo, and field, among others); and nature.

At chest level, where the heart is located, all maps pose a house. Symbolizing family and home, Map A (Figure 12), for example, places two houses on the chest and marks them with hearts that represent joy, love, and safety towards their families, relatives, cousins, neighbors, forests, and the animals around them. *"En mi casa"* ("At home") and *"en mi papá"* ("my dad"), read two notes on the right side of the same map that were added during a group discussion to signal the places with feelings of safety. In Map B (Figure 13)

and Map C (Figure 14) this acquires a more explicitly communitarian shape, allowing us to visualize what the girls verbally stated about their community: *"Somos muy unidos entre todos, entre todas las familias de aquí de la comunidad"* ("We are very united among all, among all the families here in the community"), said one of the girls that made the first map, emphasizing that these are *"valores que se llevan siempre en el corazón"* ("values that are always carried in the heart"). *"Amorosos"* ("Loving") and *"amables"* ("kind") are two words inscribed on the body-maps A and B, with accompanying hearts. These are associated with the hospitality of the community and of each home in it. The community, as they invite us to witness in these maps, is both a subject and a verb for the indigenous girls. Through the sites of congregation and exchange such as the church, the school, the field, or the *cabildo*, and in the community's geographic-emotional composition, they weave a sense of what does not get exhausted in individuality. In this sense, the girls' drawings outline a testimony of what could be the children's politics of "refusal" (Simpson, 2014). In consonance with anthropologist Audra Simpson's (2014) theorization of indigenous sovereignty, the girls' exercises of Simpson's "refusal" can be evidenced in the liberty they exert in pronouncing their feelings, exercising authority and autonomy over what they want to disclose and what they want to protect, and even contradicting narratives of what and whom is speaking of their realities.

In the middle of the body on map B (Figure 13), the girls drew their community's *"cabildo*". The *"cabildo"*, as they indicate, is a privileged and central place for the indigenous communities in their territory. In it, problems, celebrations, discussions, and agreements are treated collectively with everyone's presence. Recounting the adults'

meetings, Mother's Day, community and territorial historical events celebrations, and the body-mapping workshop that was taking place in it at that moment, they highlighted the importance of this place—even though their voices would not always be heard in it. Contrary to the latter, and occupying the centrality of map C in the stomach region (Figure 14), the girls drew their community's school. The school, inaugurated only some months before my visit, was built and equipped by the government to provide all the necessities of the community's children. For them, this space that represented great happiness, nevertheless, was also a symbol of ambiguity towards the company and its workers. In the community, there is a generalized perception that the school was built by, thanks, and as part of the company's presence. This would materialize the earlier mentioned ambivalence that makes people feel they cannot complain about CCCC's activities, even if they are harmful, due to fear of losing what is or could be at stake.

The girls, however, do not hesitate to describe this space as one where, in their words, they can play with their friends, learn new things, and have fun. For many of the girls, furthermore, school was also an important place to dream about and plan for the future. As the forehead of map C reads, *"Mi sueño es ser profesora"* ("my dream is to be a teacher"). Thus, the school is a space experienced with enthusiasm, joy, and expectations about what is to come. Reflecting on the importance of the school, one of the girls mentioned that her older sister took an exam to enter the public university in the capital of the city, and that like her, she also wants to study biochemistry when she grows up. As it became evident throughout the workshop, the school, for the girls, is lived as a space of possibility. Similar emotions are attached to the church, which also occupies a central

place, as can be observed in map A between the stomach and the genitals, and in map C on the left hand. There, the girls feel *"la fe y el amor de Dios en nuestras vidas"* ("the faith and love of God in our lives.") For the girls, this is closely linked to the community's values detailed above, to which God's word has great value.

With hearts on the legs that represent the happiness that the girls feel when running and playing soccer; in the hands and arms when they can touch, do, and play with the things they like; and in the head, throat, and ears with their dreams, wishes, ideas, and songs, the maps highlight the agency with which they subvert the perimeters and boundaries set by those in power. In their bodies, emotions are manifested in mobility, although as will be seen in the next sections, this is increasingly restricted. The field located on the left leg of Map C (Figure 14) is definitely one of the favorite spaces for girls. In this, one of them said, *"cada domingo en la mañanita jugamos fútbol entre todos, tenemos campeonatos con otras comunidades también y vamos a sus canchas o ellos vienen"* ("every Sunday morning we play soccer together, we have championships with other communities as well and we go to their fields or they come.") To this story, one of the girls added that *"a veces también se ve a los trabajadores jugando, y a veces incluso han invitado a los chicos a sus equipos"* ("sometimes workers are also seen playing, and that they have even invited the boys from the community to participate in their teams.") Although no more details were provided around these topics, the girls' cartographies of hope contest and destabilize rigid and homogenous landscapes and discourses about their community. With their drawings, they reclaim their spaces, express their desires, and re-inhabit their places.

Geographies of fear

Among the many routes marked by the girls on their maps, those that mark fear portray entangled experiences in nature, community, home, the camp site, and the road. At first glance, the inscription of the word *"miedo"* ("fear") in different parts of the body stands out in the drawings. In the first map (Figure 12. Map A), the girls placed the word "fear" on the hands, near the legs, and at the level of the stomach and hips. *"Me da miedo quedarme en mi casa solita"* ("I'm afraid to stay home alone") reads the right side of the drawing between the stomach and the hips, and a little further down is the fear of *"ahogarse en el río"* ("drowning in the river") and of *"los botes"* ("the boats"). Although these fears are different from each other, the girls expressed sensory, affective, and emotional-corporeal feelings in very similar ways. During the map description phase in the workshop, the girls pointed out that being alone, and loneliness itself, caused a feeling of helplessness generative of fear. Several of them mentioned that being alone *"cualquier cosa podría pasar"* ("anything could happen") without anyone being able to help them. The "working" hours that had been adjusted to those of the company were felt both as absences and loneliness, and at the same time, as threatening presences. The houses, when empty, unlike the previous section of this chapter, were marked as sites of vulnerability. Bringing to the fore Valentine's (1989) approach of women's fears, this reveals the space is not equal and homogeneous for everyone. How and where fear is felt is directly constitutive of the space in which it is lived.

In the right arm of the same map (Map A), a single girl is seen standing at one end of the road, and a house on the other. This representation, drawing one of the elements

highlighted in the first part of this chapter, makes an emphasis on the girls' growing fear in relation to their place and transitability in the territory. Thus, similar to what Katherine and Cecilia mentioned in 2017, the girls expressed that walking in the community, and especially near the road, be it to go to school, home, or simply to play with their friends has become dangerous and highly threatening to them. Both the hostility derived from the workers' group presence, as well as the noise, smell, and speed at which the machines are operated have re-spatialized the territory by restricting the free movement of girls through intimidation. As noted earlier, the looks, the whistles, and the catcalling had shaped the girls' "sense of place" (Rocheleau, 1995), and with that, their everyday mobility to the measure of fear.

As I pointed out earlier, the drawing of the girl alone on the road on Map A has, at the other end, a house. The proximity of the road and the house there is not coincidental. On the contrary, as the girls who drew the second map (Figure 13. Map B) remarked, over time the highway and its tributaries become progressively closer. On the second map (Map B), this is visualized on the left side of the chest portraying the united and linked community homes with a dark car on the road next to them and the literal inscription of fear. The proximity of the girls' houses to the highway, sometimes as little as 3-6 meters away, is symbolized as fearsome and aggressive. The road and its associated infrastructure have taken over the space in front of their houses and form the intrinsic sensorial elements of the *"atravesamiento"* ("crossing") experience. The barbed wire and "danger" signs are pushing them away from the highway's shoulders. The sandy dust kicked up by passing vehicles makes cooking, eating, and even breathing and seeing difficult. In this regard,

some mothers added that in these conditions both they and their youngest babies were experiencing eye infections, constant coughing, and diarrheal infections presumably related to the dust.

Furthermore, the permanent sounds of the machines overlapping with the workers' music, and the advancement of the workers' proximity to the girls' houses, as they pointed out, is felt in the body in quotidian activities as simple as taking a shower. These resemble the capture and appropriation of the common and central community's spaces that are no longer inhabited by them. As one mother pointed out during the workshop, these sensational depictions of displacement are closely related to the families' concerns about being forcibly "relocated" *somewhere* else. The girls' maps, thus, portraying "everyday, seemingly mundane, spatial practices give insight into how people produce" particular spatialities (Nightingale, 2011, 154) extending from and into the body. In signaling in a condensed manner the material and emotional interwovenness of fear, the precarization of life, and displacement, the girls' maps force us to see through the intersections and scales of their processes in places that would usually be taken as "neutral". The geographies of the body and its senses displayed here mark with accuracy the sites in which the abstract in the material merge not knowing where one begins and the other one ends.

In collectively walking through the drawn maps and their meanings, the girls' shared experiences wove a common *sense* that allowed them to interpret and name their s/place outside the realm of words. Identifying the intimate and ambiguous articulations that have put the highway and the workers at the center of their maps, the girls that drew

the third map (Figure 14. Map C) reminded me of Cabnal's (2010: 23) "territory body-land" insofar as the described advancement on the highway was lived as parallel to the advancement over their bodies. Thus, between the stomach and genitals, the girls located the road and the trucks on their bodies. It is striking to observe the warning note that accompanies the central graphic. By writing *"peligro"* ("danger") on it, the girls have again described this as a site of fear and pain. On one hand, their fear relates to the workers' language: how they treat them, and how the workers are treated violently by their bosses and peers. Among the workers' shouts, their intimidating loud laughter and whistling, the objectualizing gestures, sexual jokes, and other forms of sexual harassment stood out. Their reserved and sometimes hesitant depictions were inevitably related to those represented with a black car in Figure 13. Map B. The cars on these maps, the girls pointed out, symbolize the fear of not knowing who is on the road and what they can do to them. Some of the oldest girls signaled that the fast transiting cars and trucks could hit them, kidnap them, or rape them. In this interpretation of fear, past experiences of sexual assault and abuse of other women and adolescents in the community and neighbor communities play an important role. This brings back Pain and Smith's (2008) approach of fear in its collective dimension. Contending that fear is not only an individual experience, they argue that it also circulates "between bodies and objects in a given landscape, reverberating, intensifying and compelling action" (Pain and Smith, 2008: 76). In hearing the girls, Carmela's words back in 2017 came back to mind:

> *"A nosotros nos conmueve la situación de las chicas que ustedes están viendo aquí con esta empresa china. Nosotros somos un solo territorio, estamos en esta carretera que mire nos atraviesa como territorio, y ver*

> *las separaciones de matrimonios, los engaños, chicas embarazadas, tanta gente que no conocemos llegando de un día a otro aquí, los jóvenes maltratados, y encima dejando todo, hasta los colegios, lo que hemos luchado para que ellos salgan profesionales por irse a trabajar allá a la empresa, nos duele" (Guzmán, 2019: 48)*
>
> ("We are touched by the girls' situation that you are seeing here with this Chinese company. We are one territory, we are on this road that crossess through us as a territory, and seeing the separation of marriages, the deceptions, pregnant girls, so many people we do not know sudenly arriving here, the abused young guys, on top of everything else, they are leaving behind everything, even the schools that we have fought so much for them to become professionals, in exchange of going to work there at the company. That hurts us").

The fears they were expressing, after all, were not part of their imagination or mere speculation. On the contrary, they knew that they had been materialized in the bodies of other women like them. Their "bodymemories", as McKittrick (2006: 48) has carefully developed, were into play in the *sentipensar* (knowing-feeling) (Fals Borda, 2015) the wounded fragilities casted on their territories.

Although the aforementioned places have received special attention from the girls and their mothers throughout the workshop in expressing their feelings of risk, it is important to bear in mind that these affects were not reduced to the highway itself. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, the camp, the machine storage, and some other places that emerged from the company's presence are signaled in the maps by the sense of insecurity that they engender. This is the case of what is graphed at the lower part of the leg in the second map (Figure 13. Map B). In the right leg, the girls mark a place that, in a way, signals one of the most notable extensions and filtration of the company's presence into the community: the *"cantina"*. In the *"cantina"*, they point out, the workers, both

Bolivian and Chinese, would drink alcohol during the weekends, and sometimes even the week nights. When all the girls saw the *cantina* portrayed on this group's map, many looked at each other with the surprise of who has been exposed. Although most of them pointed out that the cantina and its immediate surroundings were not safe spaces, no one had brought it to the table before. The *cantina*, according to one of the most extrovert girls of the group, usually has loud music, colorful club lamps, and sells alcohol to the workers. The discomfort and reserve of the rest of the girls was evident. Seeing that some of them nodded timidly without adding anything else, we went on to review the rest of the map. It is worth noting, however, that the *cantina* is depicted without any other type of inscription describing it. The silence around this place, the alcohol, and the fear, then, in addition to opening queries about what was left silent, confirm that the object of fear is not the place itself, but rather the ways in which it is used and occupied. In Valentine's words (1989: 389), the experiences of fear relate to how public spaces are "occupied and controlled by different groups at different times." The discomfort, fear, and wordlessness around this site, then, reveal once again that domination and power are exerted by the workers through the intimidation and embarrassment of those who are rendered invisible: the girls.

Figure 15: "Coke and Beer" sign. Santa Ana de Museruna, Beni, Bolivia (2019). Photo: Nohely Guzmán N.

"Peligro, hombres trabajando" ("Danger, men working"), reads the sign I saw as soon as we finished the workshop. The literality of the it, when put in dialogue with the knots on the neck, chest, and stomach on the maps the girls had drawn to locate their feelings of danger and risk in their bodies, took a different meaning. The materiality in and from which the girls' geographies of fear are embedded are intrinsically corporeal, sensorial, emotional, and affective. Their maps, neither linear nor unidirectional, are an expression of the tangible materialization of fear in the landscapes (Williams and Boyce, 2013). As Williams and Boyce (2013: 899) affirm, the signs like the one I describe distributed along, in this case, the highway, "exist as materializations of the potentiality of threat, allowing fear to progressively creep into our subconscious minds and routine actions." For Santa Ana's indigenous women and girls, the fear triggered by the company's presence is lived as predatory both in the body and the territory. The spatialities of fear of body-territories in areas rendered exploitable for the accumulation of capital like the ones

here analyzed, in Segato's (2015: 147) words, are felt as turning them both into "not only an accessible territory, but also expropriable and an object of prey".

Violence, damage, and pain

As it has become visible through the maps' revision, central to the body-territory drawings is the violence that emerged from and in the physical environment of the community here approached. Sensitivity, and the very act of sensitizing, as has been expressed graphically and verbally, opens a possibility to examining the material and emotional (re)production of the s/place in terms, scales, and coordinates determined by Santa Ana's indigenous girls. Through the body-mapping process as a space, the girls named collectively and out loud their experiences of violence and pain in ways they do not usually do either with friends, at school, and let alone at home. As a result, the emotional geographies here worked narrate how and where the indigenous girls live their spatiality when it becomes painful. Through their experiences in and of Rocheleau's et al (1995) "scale of everyday use", the girls allow us to navigate the routes and sites that compose their spatialities of intimacy in its encounters with capitalist, adult, masculine, white, and degrading power. Such experiential sensations and emotions, dwelling in the simultaneous multiplicity of paradox and contradiction, will be evidenced in the maps through the location of *"curitas"* (band-aids). Metaphorically and materially, they speak to us and track the violence imbued in the capitalist processes that extend over the body-territory in particular places and forms.

Drawn in red, yellow, orange, and in some cases black with small dots, the girls' maps situate *"curitas"* in their hands, arms, hearts, genitals, faces, animals, and nature. On the left cheek and the right side of the chin in map A, and on the forehead and the right cheek in map B and C, several curitas were posed by the girls on their bodies to mark the places where they feel pain. Negative thoughts and unpleasant memories of past experiences, their performance in school, and daily chores are the primary reasons pointed by them when talking and identifying these pains. The girls that drew the map A, for example, noted that their moms, dads, and sometimes older siblings would beat them in the face and head when they act "in a disrespectful manner" *("faltando al respeto"*), if they "do not bring good grades from school at home" *("no traemos buenas notas a la casa"*), or "do not fulfill our obligations at home" *("no cumplimos con nuestras obligaciones en la casa"*). Bringing out the pain and shame that domestic violence causes to them, the girls who drew map C expressed that this is a problem that they experience at home as well. Although this was not necessarily a secret for and among the girls, signaling the parts of their bodies with curitas was an intimate process addressed by them and for them collectively. Thus, pointing to the right arm in map B, they mentioned that their family members would sometimes hit them or grab them violently there if they "do something bad" *("hago algo malo"*). The wide and transversal signaling of domestic violence here expressed, in this sense, points to a prevalent problem that exceeds and de-centers the company's presence and the construction of the highway. Contesting romanticized preconceptions of homes as spaces of safety for women (Valentine, 1989), these graphs also invites us, again, to settle in the lived experiences of contradiction and ambiguity. As

one of the girls noted around the house in Map A, *"hay cosas que sanar en la casa*" ("there are things to heal at home"). In the dialogues and vulnerable acts of listening to each other with care, empathy, and respect, this experience invokes Butler's (2018: 35) reflections—the body-mapping workshop as a space constitutes "letters, and entries to younger selves and future selves, to women and girls that we have grown with (...) To one another." This, the author argues, offers a new way of using "feminism and womanism to explore our own stories" (Butler, 2018: 35).

Around the houses, and symbolically pointing towards the community as a unit, the right arm in map C (Figure 14) centers the river as a site in pain. The drawn home, as they explained, represents Santa Ana's families that live by the river. This river, from which the community receives its name, occupies a very important place in it insofar as it shapes it and accompanies it until the areas in which they grow food. Santa Ana's river, being depicted by its strength and beauty, in addition to connecting the families of the community, is a site identified as wounded by the pollution that reaches even the furthest located families in the territory. The pollution of water, directly associated with the company's activities, is also located in the center of the body in map A (Figure 12) in the form of a river with a band-aid on it. This was signaled as an important element for the death of animals that live in it and drink that water. They and their families, the girls noted, are depicted in the river with their canoes because it is an important way of transport and for fishing. Echoing what some mothers would have mentioned earlier, they posited that there is less fish due to the foam (one of the most visible expressions of pollution) that covers most of the water in the river. Moreover, *"sanar"* ("to heal"), reads between the

river and the highway next to the right wrist in map A pointing to the forest above the right shoulder in the same map. Observing and listening the girls' drawings, Nightingale's (2011) work comes to mind. As the author asserts, "inequalities emerge through space as social and material" insofar as the environment constitutes "an extension of and extends into the body as a site of material reproduction and ecological impact." (Nightingale, 2011: 154-155) The nature-related band-aids put in place as amalgamated bodily affective processes are exceptional examples of this.

Right below the river graphed in map B (Figure 13), the girls drew a tree with a note that reads *"no talar árboles"* ("do not cut trees"). Signaling that the construction of the highway has cut many trees, they affirm that they would like them to be treated with *"amabilidad y respeto"* ("amability and respect"). Noting the increasing cutting of trees around the road, and the transformation of the remaining vegetation into brown and opaque leafs covered with construction material, the girls explained that this must be the reason why none of the maps have drawn trees around the highway. The damage made to the trees, the girls pointed out, are also related to the death of animals around the highway. As is visible in the maps A and B especially, the animals are marked with band-aids as a consequence of what they identify as an *"abusivo"* ("abusive") use of trucks. Signaling that the workers do not take care of the animals, they narrate the times they have seen the company's trucks not stopping when they see snakes, families of capybaras, dogs, turtles, foxes, and other animals that transited freely before the company's arrival. These deaths, also visible in the wish and intention of healing the river whose pollution is killing the fish and driving animals away, extend over the ducks, chickens, pigs, and cows depicted in the

left arm of map A. These notes, exemplifying Rocheleau's et al (1995) proposal of the "scale of everyday use" and the intersectional composition of it, bring to the fore Nightingale's (2011: 161) comprehension of the body as "ecological" insofar as the "material environments extend in and through the body". The embodied dimension that these drawings encompass, exceeding the binaries of outside and inside, material and subjective, and emotional and rational, allows us to visualize Cabnal's (2010) notion of the body-territory with a special intimate clarity. After all, it is in the body, as Nightingale (2011: 154) affirms, that the material environments inscribe "profound implications for social difference, space, and ecologies" that are "rarely neutral".

Chapter Five
Conclusion

> "Si las mujeres no hablan de sus cuerpos entre sí, si no reconocen sus derechos al placer y a no sufrir violencia, no podrán entender que la militarización es una práctica de invasión territorial que se vincula con la violencia contra las mujeres, al utilizar las violaciones sexuales como arma de guerra".
>
> —Berta Cáceres, *Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (COPINH).*

I have written, thought, felt, and lived this thesis in at least two times and spaces. Although these have undoubtedly taken place chronologically, the space-temporality in which I have encoded this process has been the emotional. From the collective body-mapping workshop in the Amazon in March 2019, to the art gallery in La Paz that same year, and then in the United States, I have processed with the body both near and far what the notion of the body-territory encompasses. Exactly two years have passed since the focus of this study was concluded, but the discussions that both the maps and the process of producing them have started do not cease to open horizons. Although this thesis focuses on a four hour-long workshop and three drawings exhibited in an art gallery, this work is the result of nearly four years of accompaniment to and with the women and girls of Santa Ana de Museruna. An essential part of this work has been and continues to be not only grounding and dialoguing with indigenous epistemologies, but also with their bodies, realities, and stories beyond the research encounter. What this has meant in my research practice, as I have shown in these chapters, is to disassemble theories, to face and acknowledge contradictions, to destabilize stagnant narratives, and to constantly re-negotiate physical, emotional, verbal, and imaginary spaces for the construction of

knowledge. It is in this intimate and creative process—one that contradicts the academic tradition of 'objectivity' and the erasure of the researcher—that the multiple questions that delineate this research arise. In this final section, however, I will focus only on two questions to later pose new ones looking forward to future endeavors: What perspective, sensitive to the emotional and independent of words, would allow the expression of the sensations and emotions that were structuring the body and territory of Santa Ana's women and girls with the construction of a highway by a Chinese company? What could embracing silence unfold for the understanding of the corporeal paradoxes, memories, sensations, and experiences of those who inhabit the intersections of age, race, and gender?

Through the methodological proposal that I designed and deployed on the notion of body-mapping, in this research I push forward approaches such as those of the Iconoclasistas Collective (2013), the Geobrujas Collective, and the Miradas Críticas al Territorio Collective that were later taken up by authors such as Sweet and Escalante (2015). Writing from different experiences, bodies, and personal and epistemic genealogies, the body-mapping that I propose in this thesis arises from an intuition and perhaps also a fabulation of a little explored field even in feminist geography. From my focus on the body-mapping of the body-territory, it is possible for me to answer the questions that I have posed in the research, and to approach and move away from the geopolitical processes to which I refer throughout the thesis. In an exercise of disassembling the great narratives of the state, the left, the right, and even of some feminist perspectives, in my work I intentionally develop the refusal to assume one angle or the other—that is, either seeing the girls as the irremediable victims, or the uncritical

beneficiaries of the geopolitical dynamics led by China. In doing this, I examine the ways in which the what, how, when, and why of what we ask, write, and omit is an objective in itself. This objective establishes the conditions for the production of knowledge "across forms of oppression and axes of difference while remaining grounded in the specificities of each context" (Nagar, 2019). Through body-territory cartographies, furthermore, my research offers an example of what the decolonization of the notions of space in itself can open. Embracing and settling in the discomfort of what the anthropologist Mariana Mora (2015) has called "contentious space", my case study shows how the investigative action can acquire a decolonizing and depatriarchalizing fertility in co-creating conditions to know beyond the spectacle of immiserated bodies and spaces (Mohanty, 1986; Goeman, 2013). The theory-methodology deployed here, insofar as it constitutes an epistemological move, has allowed me to move spatially between the body and its sensations in and as an autonomous and sovereign territory to decentralize capitalocentric monumentalisms. In writing this thesis, furthermore, I have realized that research can only be decolonial insofar as it deconstructs the ways in which knowledge is produced, gathered, and presented.

The movements in the spatial and epistemological renegotiations that I describe here lead me to write this thesis in the first person and make the tensions of the process explicit. In narrating in detail not only the result but also the process itself, this work puts into play the possibility of observing the traces and routes of women and girls' encounters with power in a fluid motion—the power of the company, its workers, my presence, nature, the community's men, and the adult women with respect to the girls. In pushing forward the analysis of the spatialities that result from these encounters, some key aspects of what

today I understand are denied and silenced epistemic horizons come to the fore. On the one hand, this study has shown me the value of "listening" to the voices of indigenous childhood (Schäfer, 2012) before, during, and after the investigation. These voices and bodies with their own spatialities trace rich routes to navigate both the dissent and the hopes in communities facing changes like the one I study. By deploying the body-territory mapping in terms that did not demand that girls act as adults, they were able to identify what was "relevant for them, and discuss them more openly" (Schäfer, 2012: 148) in their own terms and scales. This, in line with what was developed by Goeman (2013: 121), has made possible a "(re)mapping that leads to healthier communities". On the other hand, the deployment of the body-territory theory and methodology has allowed me to sketch the understanding and expression of agency from other angles. On their maps, the girls place both the wounds and damage caused by the Chinese company in their territory, and also the opportunities it has brought to it. In line with what Mahmood (2001: 208-210) and McKittrick (2006) affirm, the girls have shown me that reducing agency to the visible resistance of social norms is to limit the understanding of its complexity to be acceptable under the liberal and colonial gaze. The girls' maps, contrary to this and as extraordinary examples of Moore's capitalism in the web of life, propose a new question with which I close this reflection: *What spatialities are engendered in a body that becomes a territory, and in a territory that becomes a body?*

Questions like this remain pending for the future—one that has brought profound economic, political, and also bodily and emotional changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As I write these last pages, China has deepened its ties in the region through aid

due to the COVID-19 pandemic's devastating impacts in Latin America (Gallagher et al, 2021). Academics and analysts such as Gallagher et al (2021) affirm that as China is the only country with reported economic growth in the world in 2020, it has been in a privileged position to expand aid ties during and after the economic crises by-product of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is remarkable how even with governments like Bolsonaro's that have expressed their anti-Chinese repudiation on repeated occasions, the Chinese presence in Latin America continues to transcend political binaries, and is unlikely to be reduced. Parallely, Bolivia continues to face political crises in which the ultra-conservative blocs and the self-identified leftists compete for the power that neither of them holds with legitimacy. Both the de facto president Jeanine Añez now imprisoned for the crimes committed under her administration in 2019 and Luis Arce of the MAS party seem to overlap in the agenda of landowner capital expansion through projects such as the ones centered around biodiesel. In these disputes, what Nancy Postero (2017: 132) has said remains relevant: "its entanglement with global capitalism appears to enable, if not justify, a renewed sacrifice of indigenous communities, along with a renewed racist discourse" that appears to "continue regardless of who leads the state". In the end, the worn-out hints of socialism and a revolutionary project ended up being a figure of speech to justify and continue rotten political cycles that resemble rather than distinguish these two parts.

At the same time, the indigenous communities of the Beni region with whom I work have been able for the first time in their history and after 10 years of struggle, to elect their political representatives on the national scene (Los Tiempos, 2020; Opinión, 2020). This is the product of a series of protests that took place in December 2020. In these, the Tsimán,

Moxeño-Trinitario, Moxeño-Ignaciano, Yuracaré and Movima peoples of the TIM, TIMI, and TIM-I communities demanded Luis Arce's government to constitutionally recognize their indigenous autonomy. Despite the harshness with which these peoples have faced the death of their elders due to the pandemic, this has been a reason for celebration, to revisit the common history of their territories, and to envision an organic organization without the intervention of any kind. Furthermore, during these times, the girls have stopped having classes at school due to the COVID-19 outbreak. They, however, have continued to study and learn among themselves and with the teachers who live in their community. Both the girls and their mothers comment that this time they have put into practice their knowledge about healing herbs, the importance of the food they grow, and the solidarity between the territory's communities.

In this context, and after discussing this thesis with some of the girls, women, and men of the Santa Ana community by phone, they have made me realize that the indigenous theorization of the body-territory is traveling from south to north, opening horizons. Its contributions, moreover, can be extended to fields such as the bodily exploration of sexual dissident communities (Bidegain, 2014; Masson et al, 2017), in situations of urban social conflicts (Hayes-Conroy, 2018), health emergencies such as COVID-19, and in communities affected by extreme climatic changes such as the recent winter storm in Texas. Questions like the ones I propose here aim to keep the contradictions and tensions alive in order to compose a transformative body of knowledge and a decolonial geographic feminist grammar. In these times that have accentuated so crudely the inequalities that embolden white supremacy, racism, and the opening of dispossession frontiers in the

bodies of nature, it is more urgent than ever to learn from the girls' sensibilities alternative ways of being in the re-making of the world. In the end, and in the midst of these multiple turbulences, I can only echo Mishuana Goeman's (2013) incisive proposal: "Mark their words" because in them lies the future.

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